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# EAST AND WEST

*Some Reflections*



5318

BEATTY MEMORIAL LECTURES  
FIRST SERIES

104  
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GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD  
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## PREFACE

The Sir Edward Beatty Memorial Lectures were created, and endowed, by Dr. H. A. Beatty and Miss Mary Beatty as a memorial to their brother, who had served as Chancellor of McGill University from 1920 until his death in the spring of 1943. Those were difficult years, involving the extremes of economic prosperity and depression in Canada, as well as the onset of the Second World War. Four Vice-Chancellors, in succession, served under the leadership of Sir Edward Beatty, and during two lengthy periods of interregnum he was called upon to assume direct administrative responsibility, so that the development of McGill University during that critical quarter of a century is due in preponderant measure to the vision and determination of the great Canadian whose name is perpetuated in the title of these lectures.

In order that Dr. Radhakrishnan might be in a position to accept the appointment as the first Beatty Memorial Lecturer, the inauguration of the series was postponed for twelve months. The best measure of the interest in his lectures, which are reproduced in this volume, is the simple statement that more than three thousand people, students and citizens of Montreal, came night after night to hear them. Since this number was far in excess of the capacity of Redpath Hall, it might be added as further evidence of interest that this audience sat throughout the lectures on hard folding chairs in the Sir Arthur Currie Gymnasium-Armoury, which is by no means acoustically perfect, and at the conclusion of the series rose to its feet in a spontaneous ovation of sustained applause.

F. CYRIL JAMES

*Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
McGill University*



## FOREWORD

McGill University did me a great honour by asking me to inaugurate the series of Beatty Lectures. This book represents the substance of three lectures which I gave last October at McGill. The first lecture deals with the spirit of Indian culture, the second on Western culture is divided into two parts, the first dealing with Greece, Macedon, Rome, Egypt and the beginnings of Christianity, and the second with the Christian doctrine, Islam, the Crusades, Scholasticism, Renaissance, Reformation, rise of natural sciences and modern philosophy. The third deals with the problems which both East and West are today facing and the need for a creative religion.

In three lectures it is impossible to deal adequately with long periods of history. One can only take up a few salient features; even their selection will reflect individual choice and their treatment will be necessarily perfunctory. The only plea that I can make is that I have dealt with the subject in my own way taking into account limitations of time, space and knowledge. I do not expect every one to agree with what I say, but if these reflections stimulate thought I shall be amply rewarded.

I had an unforgettable experience at McGill last October and I owe it mainly to Principal Cyril James and Mrs. Irene James who looked after me with great kindness and attention bordering on devotion.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

New Delhi

*20 May, 1955*





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## LECTURE ONE

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### EAST

#### I. MIND AND SPIRIT

Edward Wentworth Beatty in whose name these lectures are founded played a notable part in the making of modern Canada. The impress of his work is found in the varied fields of industry and education, law and civic life. His leadership in education is of special importance to us. He was the Chancellor of this University for over twenty years, from 1921 to 1943.

This lectureship was established to commemorate his services to the University and probably in pursuance of his desire that McGill should develop a University Extension Movement. In his maiden speech as the Chancellor of the University, presiding over the Arts Reunion Luncheon held during McGill's Centennial celebrations, he said: 'McGill . . . must be prepared to teach not only within the College buildings, but to come off the hill into the streets, into the suburbs and country towns'.<sup>1</sup>

The words which he uttered in his Baccalaureate address to the graduating class of this University on May 26, 1935, are of significance even today: 'The world of which you are the heirs is one of bitter strife and turmoil. We—your elders have dealt unfairly with you. . . . The wild boom of post-war days came from man's failure to learn the lesson of the war. We should have emerged from that appalling misery chastened in spirit. We did not'.<sup>2</sup> He attributed the causes of the first world war to a malady of the soul. 'We gave too little thought to those spiritual values by which all human progress must be weighed. The war which ended the greatest period of human progress came from our failure to control our worship of the material by loftier standards. Do not tell me that it was no more than the outcome of German greed of conquest; of British imperialism; of French militarism; or of capitalistic lust of profits.

<sup>1</sup> D. H. Miller-Barstow: *Beatty of the C.P.R.* (1951) p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.

Britain gave the world order and material civilisation. Germany and France adorned the world with art and music, enriched it with science and with letters. The war profits of capitalists were an incident—not the cause of the war. We must look deeper. The madness that plunged the world into the bloodshed and horror of the great war was a defect of the soul—not of the mind'.<sup>1</sup> We have had another war after these words were uttered. We live today in fear of the future.

When Beatty makes out that we suffer today from 'a defect of the soul, not of the mind', he suggests that the happiness of men and nations consists in the maintenance of a natural harmony of body, mind and spirit and today we suffer because of our emphasis on the achievements of mind and neglect of the values of spirit. The resources of spirit are on the decline while the achievements of mind have reached alarming proportions. We seem to control the earth and the heavens, to understand the atoms and the stars. Yet we are scared. Something has escaped us. The contemporary world situation brings to my mind a significant short story. Christ came from a white plain to a purple city and as he passed through the first street, he heard voices overhead, and saw a young man lying drunk in the gutter. 'Why do you waste your time in drunkenness?' He said, 'I was a leper and you healed me, what else can I do?' A little farther through the town he saw a young man following a harlot and said, 'Why do you dissolve your soul in debauchery?' And the young man answered, 'Lord, I was blind and you gave me sight, what else can I do?' At last in the middle of the city he saw an old man weeping, crouching on the ground, and when he asked why he wept, the old man answered: 'Lord, I was dead and you raised me unto life, what else can I do but weep?'

Our scientific achievements help us to increase health, wealth, leisure and life itself but what do we do with them? Dissolve our soul in drink and sex or embrace nihilism which holds that consciousness is a calamity and suggests that it is better to be dead than alive?

We sometimes say that the hydrogen bomb may prove a veritable weapon of peace since its devastating character is a great deterrent to war. The hydrogen bomb is a challenge to man, a call to develop a new ethos, a new spiritual outlook. Beatty advised the youth of his time to be slow to anger, to be slow to condemn, to be ready to

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 154-155.

believe the best of others, to develop qualities of understanding and compassion.

## II. EAST AND WEST

When we take a long view of history we will find that there is not an Eastern view which is different from the Western view of life. There is not much truth in the pseudo-science of national or continental psychology which affirms that all Easterns are this and all Westerns are that. The history of any people is slightly more complicated than these sweeping statements would suggest. As a matter of fact, Eastern and Western peoples had common beginnings and developed from them relatively independent views and acquired certain features which marked them from each other. Today both of them are tackling the same problem, the reconciliation of the values of mind with those of spirit. The tension between the two constitutes the meaning and purpose of history. Whether in the East or in the West, we have unresolved contradictions and attempts to solve them, to learn from each other and adapt the inheritance of the past to new and ever-changing conditions and reshape it into a new and living pattern. It is in the striving to overcome the tension between the values of spirit and the achievements of mind that we find the incomparable soaring of the human spirit and the opening of new horizons. Even today the unconquerable spirit of man is not looking back but is looking forward, looking up, reaching out to the stars, no matter what the cost or the consequence may be. It is ours to strive, it does not matter if we fail for even our failures make for success.

It is not possible in the course of three lectures to give a comprehensive or systematic account of the relations of East and West. That demands a range of scholarship and skill of selection larger than I can lay any claim to possess. My aim is the very modest one of making a few observations on this vast problem.

East and West are terms difficult to define precisely. The North American Indians are authentic Americans as they owned the place but anthropologists relate them to Eastern races. America today is a projection and offshoot of Europe, inheriting its traditions and adopting its principles, its religious faith, its code of morals and manners, its systems of law and structures of government, its arts and sciences. The two Americas, the Anglo-Saxon North and the Latin Centre and South belong to Europe as well as to themselves.

Even if we leave aside the Americas, we cannot say precisely where Europe begins and Asia ends. Europe is the name given by the Greeks to the 'wide prospect' on which they looked, the long horizontal peninsula which is physically an annexe of the vast land mass of Asia. It is deeply indented with a long coast line and spills over into West Asia and North Africa from the southern side and from the northern, it shades off into the mass of Asia.

If we look at the problem from the point of view of history and culture, we are told 'that a single family of related languages—the Indo-European, runs almost uninterrupted, and without a definite break from Western Ireland and the highlands of Scotland to the Ganges and beyond'.<sup>1</sup> Neither East nor West has had any monopoly of the values of civilisation.

According to Thucydides, nothing of importance happened before 500 B.C., or at any rate before his time (400 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> This is factually incorrect. Long before Plato, ideas on the need of perfection in man and his institutions were set forth in different parts of Asia, China, Persia, and India. The moral code of Zarathustra aiming at the triumph of virtue, not only over the material world but over the spirit, helped to fertilise Greek thought. The emphasis which Confucius laid on individual value and social ethics is well-known.<sup>3</sup>

The major changes in the history of man occurred when man arrived as a biological species, when civilisation began, of which we know little, and in what Professor Karl Jaspers calls the Axial period, ranging roughly from 800 to 200 B.C. when philosophies and religions were promulgated in three separate areas of the world, the Mediterranean, China and India. These systems of thought repudiated tribal religion, affirmed the autonomy of the individual and his direct relationship with the Universal. In each area intellectual progress was stimulated by similar conditions, the existence of many small states. Attempts were made to establish political unity and the parallelism of spiritual development is an expression of the fundamental unity of mankind. For nearly 1500 years these cultures developed on parallel lines and the differences became emphasised,

<sup>1</sup> *The European Inheritance*, edited by Sir Ernest Barker and others (1954) Vol. III, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> I, 8-10.

<sup>3</sup> It has been said that Confucius and Jefferson agree in their concern for the ordinary man, peasant or worker, in their disdain for mysticism, their opposition to authoritarianism, their insistence on education as a proper function of government, their belief in the full development of the individual's possibilities and their unceasing search for private and public virtue.

when Western countries experienced a major transformation through the achievements of science and technology.

Astronomers tell us that the beginning of the physical universe may be dated somewhere about four or five billion years ago. Before then we had neither stars nor atoms. The earth was formed about three billion years ago. Then came in succession, the vertebrates, the mammals. Man emerged on this planet somewhere about 500,000 years ago, as an unique sort of animal, distinguished from the rest, even from his nearest relatives, the anthropoid ape, by his abandonment of the arboreal life and the adoption of bipedal locomotion. When man started walking on his hind legs, his fore-legs and fore-feet were released from the necessity of supporting the weight of his body and became hands capable of delicate manipulation. The erect posture and the control of breathing, which he attains through it, accounts for the development of speech. The decisive distinction between man and other animals, however, lay in the size and quality of his brain. The human being came, as it were, out of the darkness of unreasoning life, differing from all who had gone before, raising the question, why? This is the birth of the rational consciousness. He is no more the victim of blind physical forces but takes a hand in shaping his future. Though animals learn by trial and error and imitation, the capacity to learn by experience reaches its highest development in man.

The first manifestation of thinking is the making of tools. We find stone implements, shaped by purposive action in Europe, Asia and Africa, from early Pleistocene times.

Thought is accompanied by feeling and imagination. In the lower Paleolithic period, improvements in the form and finish of stone tools were made so as to render them not only useful but also pleasant to handle. Indications of artistic capacity survive from upper Paleolithic times, perforated shells, carved bracelets and ivory nose-plugs. Pictures painted or engraved in cave walls show the ability to reproduce in two dimensions what is perceived in three dimensions. Evidently the people of the period had knowledge of the rules of perspective and the relevant optical laws. Thinking and imagination were both active. When Sophocles says: 'Wonders are many, but none there be so strange, so fell, as the child of man',<sup>1</sup> he refers not only to thinking, learning and remembering but also to imagining, creating new ideas and preserving and communicating

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Murray's E.T. (*Antigone*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd).



knowledge over distances of time and space. Works of imagination are as old as the practical and material tools.

The transition from food-gathering to food production marks the Neolithic revolution. The cultivation of cereals and the breeding of animals characterised this change which led to a rapid increase in population. These led to a new economy. Tilling the soil with a digging stick or a hoe, then using the plough drawn by oxen or other draught animals, irrigating the soil by artificial channels from rivers, all these led to a fresh technology. The Neolithic revolution meant a new and more aggressive attitude to nature. Its members, instead of passively accepting what is given, adapted it to suit their needs. They manufactured artificial substances which do not occur in nature, pottery, bricks, textiles. They produced wheels, domesticated animals, built houses and made clothes of woven linen or wool or sewn hides to protect themselves from climatic changes. By imposing discipline on themselves they laid the foundation of durable societies. Food production is the essential condition of civilisation and available evidence shows that it began in Egypt and the Middle East nearly 2000 years earlier than anywhere in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Human life is an associative life, of co-existence and co-operation. This group life is not a static process but a dynamic one of action and interaction. The social or co-operative life is not effected by instinct, as in the beehive and the ant-hill, but through meaning and purpose. It is this mental reality that transforms the herd into a human society. It expresses itself through speech and symbols, through religious and political institutions.

Recorded history extending back for six thousand years is but a short span compared with the hundreds of thousands of years of inaccessible prehistory, when the decisive steps in the making of man were taken. In those long ages men existed in various forms and in different parts of the world, knowing little of one another.

The distinctions of East and West are made with Europe as the centre. Geographical areas are not cultural or anthropological entities.<sup>2</sup> Neither East nor West is a corporate single entity. Each is a blanket term used to cover a number of separate peoples and

<sup>1</sup> Professor V. Gordon Childe observes that 'it seems likely that the neolithic economy was introduced into or diffused to Europe from the near East' though he admits that this view is incapable of rigorous proof. *The European Inheritance*, Vol. I (1954) p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> From her geographical relation to Europe, the East is divided into the near East, the Islamic world, the Middle East, India, Indonesia and the Archipelago and the Far East, China, Japan and Indo-China.

regions in different stages of development. Each had its own individualised cultures. There is little in common between an Afghan Muslim and a Filipino Catholic, between a Chinese Taoist and a Ceylonese Buddhist. China, India and Japan have had their own cultural developments, even as France and Germany, Spain and Scandinavia have had. We cannot therefore speak of a Western or an Eastern culture, for they have had different sub-varieties—notwithstanding common beginnings. Yet the sum of the affinities which link the sub-cultures of the West is larger than the sum of the affinities which link them to non-Western cultures.

If we take a long view of history, we shall find that all human beings and their social forms have certain fundamental characteristics which are more primary than the differences which seem to dominate our minds. Yet the differences are distinctive and these give form and flavour to a culture which gives to its members a poise and an assurance derived from a delicate balance of forces striving in contrary directions. Indian culture, for example, is a long and varied tradition, a great uninterrupted endeavour in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in science and humanities.

When we speak of a historic culture we refer to the norms and beliefs which sustain it, the spiritual forces which determine its social framework. A culture is not the superstructure of the material means of production as the Marxists believe. The very names Hindu India, Buddhist Asia, Western Christendom or Islamic society suggest that spiritual traditions, philosophies of life underlie each society. The social institutions, economic arrangements and scientific beliefs are all bound together by certain ideals, by which men overcome the dualism of their nature, the animal and the human, instinct and intellect, individual and society. As long as a society lives by its ideals, its tools and forms have meaning. If the faith fails, the society loses its guide and direction. The withering away of vital beliefs is the symptom of cultural decline. Culture, to use Spengler's words, hardens into civilisation, into what has become and no longer has the capacity to become, to grow. All cultures have their roots, old and new. They receive influences from others. The Chinese and the Hindu cultures were long ago in touch with those of the West and vice versa. There has been far more cross-fertilisation of ideas than we are inclined to acknowledge.

## III. THE INDUS CIVILISATION

Bishop Westcott told the late Mr. C. F. Andrews: 'India and Greece were the two great *thinking* nations who had made the history of the world. As Greece had been the leader of Europe, India would always be the leader of Asia'.<sup>1</sup> While India repudiates any claim to the leadership of Asia, and acknowledges the antiquity and importance of the Chinese culture, this statement points to the important influence of India on Asian affairs from early times.

Indian culture, with its mysticism and positivism, with its meta-physical leanings and rationalist spirit, has been a potent influence in the world for over four thousand years. Indonesia and Indo-China, Malaya and Thailand, Burma and Ceylon, China and Japan, to some degree, are witnesses to the spirit of India, Brāhmanical and Buddhist. We cannot look at the magnificent grandeur of Angkor or the still beauty of Borobudur, without a feeling of wonder at the marvellous inspiration and skill in execution of those great builders.

No wonder, Kālidāsa, one of our great poets, who knew about India's influence abroad, described the Himālayas, as if it were the measuring rod of the earth, the standard for civilisations.<sup>2</sup> The Himālayas are known as the place where the gods reside.<sup>3</sup>

If we wish to know the spirit of a culture which has had a long and continuous evolution, we cannot get at it by taking a cross section of it, at any one stage. It is not to be found either in its earlier phases or in its later developments. Any historical process can be understood only by surveying the whole growth and grasping that inner meaning, which is struggling for expression at every stage, though never expressed perfectly at any stage. This is the spirit which binds together the different stages of its history, which is present in the earliest as well as in the latest. What is this meaning, this spiritual core of the Indian culture?

Until the other day, we thought that India had a high civilisation nearly three thousand years ago which exerted great influence on the West through the Greeks and the Arabs. The archæological discoveries of Harappa and Mohenjodaro have made it clear that there was a highly developed civilisation about 3000 B.C. in the Indus

<sup>1</sup> *Charles Freer Andrews* by Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes (1949) p. 18. (G. Allen & Unwin.)

<sup>2</sup> *asty uttarasyām diśi devatātmā  
himālayo nāma nagādhirājah  
pūrvāparau toyanidhī vagāhya  
sthītaḥ prthivyā iva mānadaṇḍaḥ.*

*Kumārasambhava. I, 1.*

<sup>3</sup> *deva-bhūmitvam sūcyate.*

Valley. From the brief inscriptions on the seals and the amulets, we may infer that this civilisation exerted a great influence on the later religious life of India.<sup>1</sup> Sir John Marshall tells us that there is enough evidence to show the presence in India of a highly developed culture that 'must have had a long antecedent history on the soil of India, taking us back to an age that can only be dimly surmised'.<sup>2</sup> Professor Childe writes: 'India confronts Egypt and Babylonia by the third millennium B.C. with a thoroughly individual and independent civilisation of her own, technically the peer of the rest. And plainly it is deeply rooted in the Indian soil'. He continues: 'it has endured; it is already specifically Indian, and forms the basis of modern Indian culture'.<sup>3</sup> This culture had affinities with the culture of the Western nations.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Father Heras writes: 'India has not changed much in the course of ages. Invasions have taken place, wars have been waged in her vast plains, new nations and races have conquered the land and ruled over it, foreign civilisations have brought new notions and new ideals; but everybody and everything has been remodelled and reshaped and recast by the influence of the Indian nation and its ancient civilisation. The ancient civilisations of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria have been blotted out from the map of the world. But that of India, the first lights of which have been discovered in modern times along the banks of the Indus, is still alive . . .'. *Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture* (1953) p. XI.

<sup>2</sup> *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilisation* (1931) Vol. I, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> *New Light on the Most Ancient East* (1934) p. 220. Professor Frankfort writes: 'It has been established beyond a possibility of doubt that India played a part in that early complex culture which shaped the civilised world before the advent of the Greeks'. *The Indus Civilisation and the Near East*. Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology. Vol. VII, p. 12. Dr. Hall states: 'There is little doubt that India must have been one of the earliest centres of human civilisation and it seems natural to suppose that the strange un-Semitic, un-Aryan people who came from the East to civilise the West were of Indian origin, especially when we see with our eyes how very Indian the Sumerians were in type'. 174.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Weber places the ancient civilisation of Egypt and Babylonia alongside the cultures of China and India as examples of primary culture that remains unhistorical and bound to magic. He contrasts these with the secondary cultures which have arisen only in the West, based on the Græco-Jewish foundations. Karl Jaspers contests this view and observes: 'The India and China that we know were born from the Axial period, not primary but secondary; spiritually they penetrated to the same depth as the West, which happened neither in Egypt and Babylonia nor in the aboriginal cultures of India and China'. Karl Jaspers: *The Origin and Goal of History* E.T. (1953) p. 278. Alfred Weber is not unaware of this fact. He writes: 'From the ninth to the sixth century B.C., the three cultural spheres of the world, which had formed in the meantime—the Hither Asiatic-Greek, the Indian and the Chinese—came with remarkable simultaneity and apparently independently of one another, to a religious and philosophic quest, enquiry and decision directed toward universals. From this starting-point in a synchronistic world epoch dating from Zoroaster, the Jewish prophets, the Greek philosophers, from Buddha, from Lao-Tse, they evolved those religious and philosophic interpretations of the world and those attitudes of mind which, developed and recast, merged, reborn, or transformed and reformed under mutual spiritual influence, constitute man-

Mohenjodaro was at its best between 3500-2250 B.C. It was laid out with straight roads running east and west, north and south, thirty-three feet wide, with side streets of half that width. The buildings were made of burnt brick set in mud mortar. Some of them were several storeys high. They had baths with drainage systems and in addition there were public bath-houses. The drain pipes were of pottery joined together. Their love of beauty is evident from the amulets made of clay or steatite rock, beautifully glazed or carved to represent a bull, a tiger or an elephant or a crocodile. Their delineation of animals is true to life. They knew how to use metals, gold and silver, lead and copper. They knew how to make alloys made of bronze. There is the figure of a delightful dancing girl cast in bronze. We find bangles and bracelets, nose discs. There are scales which show that they knew weights and measures. Marbles are found and some kind of game played with a marked board with pieces to match. They knew the use of cotton.<sup>1</sup>

Among the relics of a religious character found at Mohenjo-daro are not only figurines of the mother goddess, but also figures of a male god, who is the prototype of the historic Śiva. Obviously many of the features of modern Hinduism are derived from very early sources. Sir John Marshall tells us that the god, who is three-faced, is seated on a low Indian throne, in a typical attitude of meditation or yoga, with legs bent double beneath him, heel to heel, with toes turned downwards and hands extended above the knees. He has a deer throne and has the elephant, the tiger, the rhinoceros and the buffalo grouped round him. This figure of Śiva, the great Yogi, has been there for five or six millenia dominating the spiritual landscape of India indicating that perfection can be achieved only through self-conquest, through courage and austerity, through unity and brotherhood in life. This ideal is, to be met with in the seer of the Upaniṣads rapt in communion with the Eternal, in the calm and compassion of the Buddha victorious over ignorance and ill-will, in the ecstasy of the saint who, through his heart's surrender, becomes one with Universal love and the servant of God, who, lifted above selfish desire, carries out on earth the will of the Transcendent

kind's criteria of faith in the world religions and its criteria of philosophic interpretation, to the religious side of which nothing fundamentally new has been added since the end of this period, i.e. since the sixteenth century'. Ibid. p. 279.

<sup>1</sup> Centuries later, Herodotus referred to 'a plant which, instead of fruit, produces wool of a finer and better quality than that of sheep of which the Indians make cloth'.

Supreme. Creative life is possible only for those who are capable of concentration and integrity, who have the courage to be lonely in their minds. It is in moments of solitariness that we glimpse visions of truth and beauty, bring them down to earth, clothe them with emotions, carve them into words, cast them in movements or frame them into philosophies. If our minds are to become vehicles of spirit, solitude and meditation are essential. All growth is from within outwards. Spirit is freedom. True wealth is in being, not in having. A free mind is not a herd mind.

Early in India's history a definite direction has been given to man's mind. To be, to hold the soul in its serenity is the end of man. There is in us the principle of subjectivity which is free from the pressure of external influences. Ordinarily we are automata; our words and deeds, our moods and emotions, our thoughts and ideas are produced by external forces. But man must learn to act from a different basis. He must become a different being. He must not be satisfied with what he is. He must be born again or renewed in his consciousness. He whose life is cumbered with distractions and luxuries is not necessarily on a higher level than he who pursues the inward way, grows from within, develops new qualities and powers that he does not possess now. Man cannot be satisfied with earthly possessions, not even with knowledge which instructs, informs and even entertains. He has another destiny, the realisation of the spirit in him.

#### IV. VEDIC CULTURE

The Vedic period, on a most cautious estimate, covers the period between 1500 to 600 B.C. The *Rg Veda* is older than Homer or the Old Testament. The concluding parts of the Veda, the Upaniṣads, which are the sources of the Vedānta, antedate the Orphic and the Eleusinian mysteries, Pythagoras and Plato. The Vedas represent a fusion of Aryan and pre-Aryan thought.

The metaphysical agony, which alone makes man great, bursts forth in the famous words of the *Rg Veda*: 'There was neither being nor non-being. There was neither the air nor the sky above. What is it that moves? In what direction? Under whose guidance? Who knows, who can tell us, where the creation occurred, whence it cometh and whether the gods were only born thereafter? Who knows whence it hath come? Whence creation did come, whether it is created or not created? He alone knoweth, whose eye watcheth over



it from the height of heaven, and yet, doth he know?"<sup>1</sup> These words of spiritual yearning, metaphysical unease and intellectual scepticism set the tone of India's cultural growth. The seers of the *Rg Veda* believe in a truth, a law which governs our existence, which sustains the different levels of our being, an infinite reality, *ekam sat*, of which all the different deities are but forms. The divinities of the *Rg Veda* are the powers of the Immortal, guardians of the truth, whose help we can gain through prayer, worship and gifts. Their grace enables us to grow into the law of truth, *ṛtasya pañthā*.<sup>2</sup>

The truths suggested in the Vedas are developed in the Upaniṣads. We find in the seers of the Upaniṣads, an utter fidelity to every layer and shade of truth as they saw it. This fact dated some of their detailed judgments but their method of approach, their utter integrity of mind and spirit, their central intuitions into the nature of spirit remain of permanent value.

They affirm that there is a central reality, the one without a second, who is all that is and beyond all that is. The Spirit abides beyond the seeming victories of matter, beyond the immeasurable vastness of stellar space, beyond the mutations of the heavenly bodies. All this is spun and woven in the Spirit and it is the Spirit that gives meaning to the world.

The Real, which is the inmost of all things, is the essence of one's soul. 'Smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, this essence of being lies hidden in the heart of the creature'. The one doctrine by which the Upaniṣads are best known to the outside world is that of *tat tvam asi*; the Eternal is in oneself. The Divine dwells in the secret places of the heart. 'The ancient being, imperceptible to the senses, the Being deep in the unknown wrapped in shadows, dwelling in the abyss, lives in one's heart'. By the reflection of the divine presence, the human individual becomes sacred.

To discover and enter into unity with the Real is the aim of the

<sup>1</sup> X, 129.

<sup>2</sup> In Mittani (Asia Minor), we have cuneiform inscriptions (fourteenth century B.C.) mentioning the Vedic deities, Indra, Mitra, Varuna and Aśvins. Xerxes is reported to have destroyed a temple at Media where people adored gods with Vedic names like Indra and Sarva. The kinship of the Vedic and the Avestan beliefs is well-known and the Iranians and the Indians had lived together or in close proximity from remote antiquity. The Vedic Mitra, associated with the light of the sun is in ancient Iran Mithras whose cult spread in the Western world and competed with Christianity in its claim to be the unique revelation of the divine truth and purpose for mankind. A Roman temple to Mithras has been recently discovered in the heart of the city of London, near St. Paul's Cathedral.

human being. This union is not to be interpreted in extrinsic terms. It is not contemplating or loving or serving God as an object external to ourselves. It is an activity which can be described only as possessing God and being possessed by Him. Human intellect is quite incapable of making reliable statements of a sphere which is beyond its scope. But the human heart is quite capable of responding to the Spirit.

The highest state is said to be one of *jñāna*, wisdom. This word indicates the intrinsic intelligibility of the Supreme, which exceeds the finite powers of understanding. The highest state is above reason, not without reason. Intuitive insight is a total awareness attained through the dedication of all our powers. It is not a question of merely entertaining ideas. It is a transforming knowledge, a reshaping of personality, a renewal of being. It is a vision, an awareness, a release into boundless freedom. Here, to know and to be, to possess and to enjoy are one. He, who has this awareness, can no more question the truth than he can doubt the shining of the sun when he stands in its glare. This awareness is what is called *vidyā*: its opposite is *a-vidyā*, confinement within the narrow bounds set by the mind and the senses.

This union is not achieved by reason alone but by the whole personality. This requires self-discipline, a conquest of self-seeking desire with its fears, hatreds and anxieties. 'The sage whose passions are at rest sees within himself the majesty of the inward self'.<sup>1</sup> Only by a life of complete self-renunciation, an emptying of self can we attain higher knowledge. Without it, reason itself is distorted by unstable emotions.

In the schools of philosophy in Western universities, the most popular system today is what is known as Logical Positivism. It divides all statements into empirical and non-empirical and affirms that the non-empirical statements are tautological and the empirical ones are contingent and verifiable in sense-perception. Propositions that are neither tautological nor verifiable, are just simple nonsense. Metaphysics, ethics, religion are emotive, non-factual, cannot claim to be knowledge. This view assumes that experience is limited to sensible data and intellectual constructions. On the other hand, the Upaniṣads affirm that the human self is not to be limited to waking experiences where its tools are observed data and inferences from them. There are experiences which are ineffable, incommunicable

<sup>1</sup> *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* II, 20.



by words and concepts. The human being has potentialities of which he is not normally aware.

If awareness of God is the end of religion, we must have leisure to cultivate that awareness. Man is most human when he is most alone. A solitary, who is not used to express what he sees and feels, may have intense experiences which are less articulate than those of one whose nature is exhausted by his social activities. It may well be that sights and impressions which others brush aside with a glance, a light comment or a smile, engage his attention. They sink silently in; they take on meaning; they become emotion, experience. Whether in science or philosophy, in literature or art, contemplative insight gives birth to the unique, the original, the individual. In his highest thoughts, in his deepest moods, man is alone.

As religion is experience of reality, there is less concern with religious doctrine than with religious feeling, religious life. When we speak of religious conflicts, we mean conflicts about the theories of the universe, about doctrines of God. The essential religious experience is not a matter of belief in a set of propositions but is a movement of the whole self to the daily challenge of actual human relations. Those who have perception of the Eternal Spirit realise that religion does not depend on theories. They have a sense of the mystery of God and this realisation of mystery is the foe to all fanaticism. It induces a sense of humility which is the one sure preventive of over-confidence in human reason. We are not deceived by the pride of knowledge.

All predication rests upon the ineffable. Existence is not a predicate. It is not definable but given. What is given in religion is too subtle and too complex to be expressed in logical propositions. Being is not directly accessible to rational analysis as are concepts formed by abstraction. It is essentially unconceptualisable. It is unreachable by abstraction.

Refusal to transgress the limits of the definable comes out prominently in the Upaniṣads. 'We cannot reach Him, neither by speech, nor by understanding nor by sight. We can see Him only by saying He is'. The Real is Infinite. There is nothing before or after it, nothing outside it. All things that exist, that have ever existed or that could ever exist, are a partial and fragmentary showing forth of the possibilities which it includes within itself. This Brahman is not one, nor simple unity, for the ideas of oneness and unity are notions conceived in our limited minds and Brahman is limitless. It is

described as non-dual, *a-dvaita*, secondless, *a-dvitiya*, as unity and duality are equally meaningless in regard to it. It can only be described negatively: not this, not this, *na iti, na iti*.

Truth is of the universal order. It is supra-individual and is unaffected by individual influences or conditions of space and time. These relate to the outward expressions and not to the inner reality. Beliefs, opinions, dogmas belong to the contingent order and are variable and changing while truth is eternal and changeless. This is the difference between *śruti* and *smṛti*. The former is direct inspiration, pure intuition and the latter is reflection of the same in the rational order. The prophet souls, by virtue of their discipline and detachment, win through to the naked vision but we see the truth reflected through various rational structures. The truth which is the kernel of every religion is one and the same; doctrines, however, differ considerably since they are the applications of the truth to the human situation. Every age has its variations and is determined by its own assumptions which seem to it self-evident. Since the truth itself is beyond any expression that can be found for it, there can be no such thing as the perfect formulation. All are necessarily inadequate and if taken too literally, lead to error. Every formula, every attempt to enclose reality within words and concepts, which is true within limits and is adapted to the time and occasion, will serve as a support of contemplation, an aid towards the understanding of that which can be enclosed in no formula, symbol or doctrine. The doctrines are not irresponsible. We cannot think as we like. Nor are they unnecessary. The language in which the truth is expressed consists of many dialects adapted to the needs of the different peoples. They are different means to the single end. The differences are fascinating but subordinate; the unity is the reality.

There is a recognition of the diversity of ways which lead to this one goal of enlightenment. Each one sets out on his journey from the place in which he finds himself. Hindu and Buddhist doctrines are potentially wide and universal. They answer to the spiritual needs and capacities of every type of human being. The modes of address and the ways of approach are many. Those who adopt a particular way or method are tempted to regard it as final and exclusive. But when they gain awareness of the intense reality, they realise that the paths leading to it are as wide as truth itself. Rites, ceremonies, systems and dogmas lead beyond themselves to a region of utter clarity and so have only relative truth. They are valid so

long as they are assigned their proper place. They are not to be mistaken for absolute truth. They are used to communicate the shadow of what has been realised. They indicate but do not define. Every word, every concept is a pointer which points beyond itself. The sign should not be mistaken for the thing signified. The sign-post is not the destination.

The universe receives the stamp of holiness through the reflection of the divine presence. It is a temple of God 'who, being in the earth, is different from the earth, whom the earth knows not, the inner light, the immortal one'.<sup>1</sup> The Divine presence sets the universe free from blind forces and strife.

There is an emphasis on the spiritual as distinct from the rational character of the human being. Man is the inheritor of the spark of the divine. He has in him the urge to creation, which is the mark of his freedom. He can raise himself above himself. He is essentially subject, not object. If we try to possess him as flesh, or as mind to be moulded, we will fail to recognise that man is essentially the unseizable, who bears the image and likeness of God and is not the product of natural necessity. He is not something thrown off, as it were, by the cosmic whirl. As a spiritual being, he is lifted above the level of the natural and the social world. When the natural life of man comes to itself, his spiritual being becomes manifest.

Nature is not opposed to spirit. It is attachment to nature that is inconsistent with spiritual dignity. Asceticism is opposed not to enjoyment but to attachment. It is not necessary for us to throw off the limitations of nature. Our bodies are temples of the divine and means for the realisation of value, *dharma-sādhana*. Spiritual freedom is not inconsistent with physical life. The great chain of being, the hierarchical structure of the universe, the interaction between all levels of life and existence are stressed by the ancient thinkers.

The total surrender of the soul to God, the ineffable communion of soul and God are translated by varied images: 'Even as the sparks spring from the blaze and return to the blaze, even as the rivers come from the mists of the ocean and return to the ocean'.

When human beings are most clearly aware, most awake, they feel, that in some sense which cannot be clearly articulated, they are instruments for the expression of Spirit, 'vessels' of the Spirit. When we realise this, we outgrow individualism and espouse the cause of our fellowmen because we and our fellowmen are the expression

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III, 7, 3.

of the same Spirit. We become the instruments of the Transcendent Self and lead lives of harmony, nobility and charity.

The Hindu religion enjoins active charity, meekness and human tenderness. Its humanity extends even to animals. In all conflict with evil, the method to be used is love and not force. When we use evil methods to defeat evil, it is evil that wins.

While, theoretically, the unique value of all individuals is admitted, its implications have not been worked out in the social structure. There is more real democracy in the West than in the East. The caste system was originally intended to encourage a wide range of individual differences, but it has come to denote privilege and snobbery. That many men should by the accidents of birth and opportunity have a life of toil and pain, hardness and distress while others no more deserving have a life of ease, pleasure and privilege, arouses indignation in sensitive minds. The petrified caste system by which large numbers have fallen into superstition, practising rituals which they do not understand, is utterly inconsistent with the ideal of the latent divinity of all men. This principle does not support the attempt of some dictators to make us all alike and if possible to make us all into a single being. We cannot all merge into one another for we are born separately and die separately and so will always be running off the totalitarian tracks.

From the emphasis on the immanence of the Divine in man, it follows that there is not a single individual, however criminal he may be, who is beyond redemption. There is no place at whose gates it is written 'Abandon all hope, ye who enter here'. There are no individuals who are utterly evil. Their characters have to be understood from within the context of their lives. Perhaps the criminals are diseased fellowmen, whose love has lost its proper aim. All men are the children of immortality, *amṛtasya putrāḥ*. The spirit is in every one, as a part of oneself, a part of the substratum of one's being. It may be buried in some like a hidden treasure, beneath a barren debris of brutality and violence, but it is there all the same, operative and alive, ready to come to the surface at the first suitable opportunity.

Salvation is not automatic. It depends on our effort. To make out that salvation is not something we earn or deserve, it is said to be an entirely free and spontaneous gift of the Supreme and hell consists in our wilful failure to appreciate it. The Indian view, however, emphasises that it is the function of morality to earn life eternal.

Grace is not an arbitrary dispensation of a distant deity.

In the Upaniṣads we find formulated the distinction between Absolute Spirit and personal God, between the ultimate truth of the eternal and the relative truth of mortal existence. They trace the lives of the inward growth of man from the physical to the spiritual mode of existence. They give us techniques for spiritual realisation, which are flexible and continuous and discourage claims for the monopoly of truth.

#### V. BUDDHISM

The sixth century B.C. was a period of great awakening, the world over; Confucius in China, Pythagorus in Greece and Mahāvīra and the Buddha in India belong to it. The Buddha's doctrine is a restatement of the truths of the Upaniṣads with a new emphasis. He calls religion *dhamma*, righteousness which is the way to perfection.

The Buddha's vision of the Spirit expressed itself in a life of wisdom, *prajñā* and compassion, *karuṇā*. But he did not indulge in theories of reality. He remained utterly silent, inarticulate about his experiences. He shows the way by which we can, by our unfaltering effort, get to the place where he is and see what he sees. We should not demand proofs of his knowledge but seek to become ourselves aware of it by undertaking the necessary labour. Contemplation is the power of transforming the whole man and assimilating him to the object.

The ideal of nirvāṇa is a negative formulation of the positive freedom or mokṣa of the Upaniṣads. The Buddha's eightfold ethical path is an austere sublimation of the Vedic dharma, of the Upaniṣad insistence on *dayā*, compassion, *dama*, self-control and *dāna*, charity. Those who attain bodhi or enlightenment help those who are in a fallen condition to realise their divine potentialities. Whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, the divine is in us, and the end of man consists in attaining the stature of the Buddha.

Mātrceta (first century A.D.) describes the Buddha in these words : 'Towards an enemy intent on ill, you are a friend intent on good ; even in a constant fault-seeker you are bent on searching for virtues'. 'You ate even bad food, accepted hunger sometimes, trod rough paths, slept on mud trampled by cattle. Out of love for those to be trained you undertook service attended by insult and changed your

dress and speech, master though you were'.<sup>1</sup> Asaṅga, the Buddhist metaphysician of the fourth century speaks of Buddhist compassion : 'The bodhisattva has in the very marrow of his being a love for all creatures, which is like the love one has for an only son. As a dove cherishes her young and patiently broods over them, so does the Compassionate One with the creatures who are His children'. He tells us to have 'compassion for the wretched, compassion for the hot-tempered, compassion for the angry, compassion for the slave of passion, compassion for him who is obstinate in error'. Śāntideva advises us to 'do good even to our worst enemies'. Honen, the Japanese teacher (1132-1212), taught the worship of Amitābha, Infinite light, (Amida, Japanese) : 'There is no hamlet so forlorn that the rays of the silver moon fail to reach it. Nor is there any man who, by opening wide the windows of his thought, cannot perceive divine truth and take it into his heart'.

In both Hinduism and Buddhism, the distinction between the Kingdoms of light and of darkness, between heaven and hell becomes untenable. The cosmic power of the Eternal One, his universal love will not suffer defeat. Hindu and Buddhist systems aim at universal salvation. According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Buddha deliberately refrained from coming to the final term of enlightenment in order to help others on the way. He has taken a vow that he will not enter into nirvāṇa until everything that exists, every particle of dust, has reached the goal.

This does not mean that the Hindu and the Buddhist religions cancel the distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil. It only means that even the evil have other chances. The law of karma provides the soul with a succession of spiritual opportunities. If there is only one chance given to human beings, they have, at the end of this one life, to be redeemed if good or condemned to eternal fire, if evil. The whole doctrine is inconsistent, if God is infinite love and infinite compassion.

The spread of Buddhism in the centuries before the Christian era in the East, in Tibet, Burma, Nepal, Cambodia, Annam, China and

<sup>1</sup> kadannāny api bhuktāni  
kvacit kṣud adhivāsītā  
panthāno viśamāḥ kṣunnāḥ  
suptaḥ gokaṇṭhakeṣv api 115.  
prāptāḥ kṣepāvrtāḥ sevā  
veśabhāṣāntaraḥ kṛtam  
nātha vaineyavātsalyāt  
prabhunāpi satā tvayā. 116. Śatapañcāśaṭka.



Japan and in the West, Afghanistan, Pamir, Turkestan, Syria and Palestine, without spilling a drop of blood, is well known.

From the third century B.C., there were conquests of culture, *dharma-vijaya*, in the regions of Indo-China, Indonesia, in the Malay peninsula. Hindu culture established itself very early in Java where are preserved Borobudur temples and reliefs. In Cambodia, the great temple of Angkor-vat was begun round about A.D. 1090 and completed fifty years later. Familiar Indian names like Champa, Kāmbhoja, Amarāvati, names which we find in the Buddhist texts, were given to the places in Indian colonies even as European names like Boston, Cambridge and Syracuse are taken over by settlers in the United States from their European homelands. Brāhmanical and Buddhist faiths prevailed in this Farther India and came to terms with each other as in India. King Harṣa, the last ruler of Northern India (A.D. 606-647), dedicated temples to Śiva and the Buddha.<sup>1</sup>

The disappearance of Buddhism from India is due to the practical coalescence of the two faiths, especially when both the Brāhmanical and the Buddhist faiths got mixed up with gross superstitions. The over-emphasis on an exclusive ethical pathway to salvation by some of the Buddhistic schools made it incompatible with the flexible, many-sided, synthetic genius of the Indian religious consciousness. The Indian religion rejected the exclusiveness and assimilated the valuable teachings of Buddhism and thus preserved the line of continuity. This period is distinguished by the rise of great philosophical systems, epic literature, artistic advance, scientific development and immense political activity. The teachers of South India, Saṃkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, effected a cultural union between the North and the South, between the Aryan and the Dravidian, and laid the foundations of Indian national unity.

## VI. ZOROASTRIANISM

The followers of Zoroastrianism, when they were expelled from their country owing to Muhammadan persecution, took shelter in India. A Parsi historian writes: 'The Persian or Parsi fugitives, after undergoing numerous hardships and nearly incurring destruction succeeded in gaining the shores of India, where the rights of shelter

<sup>1</sup> In Java, the Buddha was adored as the youngest brother of Śiva. An East Javan King about A.D. 1300 was called Śiva Buddha. A bilingual Kāmbhojan inscription (c. A.D. 1200) salutes *Aśvattha*, the King of trees, who has Brahmā as root, Śiva as trunk and Viṣṇu as branches.

and settlement were conceded by a Hindu ruler'.<sup>1</sup> The Parsees are said to have landed in Sanjan about A.D. 716 and the first fire temple was built there through the generosity of the Hindu ruler. Zoroastrianism is not a proselytising creed. It encouraged the practice of other religions.

#### VII. ISLAM

While the Parsees came as fugitives, the Muslims and the Christians came as conquerors. The Hindu attitude to Islam was one of toleration. From very ancient times, India had intimate relations with the Arabs, especially in trade and commerce and there were land and sea routes established between the two countries. The Muslims were welcomed in India by the Hindu rulers who permitted them to build mosques and spread their message. Indian genius did not believe in compelling people to choose their way of life. It encouraged each group that found its home in India to live by its own conception of the good life. Abdul Razak, the Ambassador from the court of Persia about the middle of the fifteenth century wrote: 'The people (of Calicut) are infidels; consequently I consider myself in an enemy's country, as the Muhammadans consider every one who has not received the Qurān. Yet I admit that I meet with perfect toleration, and even favour; we have two mosques and are allowed to pray in public'.<sup>2</sup>

When Islam spread in the country, theistic developments became more prominent in the doctrines of Rāmānanda and Kabīr, Rāmdās and Dādu, Tukārām and Tulsidās, Nānak and Caitanya. Attempts at the reconciliation of the Hindu and the Muslim faiths were made not only by the spiritual leaders but by the emperor Akbar who toned down the dogmatism of Islam. Akbar who combined an inquiring mind with a tender heart declares that 'there are sensible men in all religions and abstemious thinkers and men endowed with miraculous powers among all nations'. He continues: 'Each person according to his condition, gives the Supreme Being a name but, in reality, to name the unknowable is vain'.<sup>3</sup> Jahangir said of the Hindu anchorite Jadrūp that 'he had thoroughly mastered the science of the Vedānta, which is the science of Sufism'.<sup>4</sup> Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, is the author of a treatise

<sup>1</sup> Karaka: *History of the Parsis* (1884) Vol. I, p. xv.

<sup>2</sup> Murray: *Discoveries and Travels in Asia*, Vol. II, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Vincent Smith: *Akbar, the Great Moghul* (1917) pp. 349-50.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of Jahangir*, E.T. by Beveridge, Vol. I, p. 356.



designed to prove that the differences between the Hindu and the Muslim faiths were only matters of language and expression.

The great contribution of Iranian genius to Islam was pervasive and subtle, quickening and humanising. The pre-Islamic faith of Zoroastrianism and the early cults of Manichæism and Mithraism influenced the development of Islam in Iran. In the Sūfi development of Islam, of which 'Attar, Sādi, Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī and Hāfiz are illustrious representatives, we have a close approximation to the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. While the transcendent remoteness of Allāh is the distinctive feature of Islam, His loving nearness to the human soul is stressed in Sūfism. It believes in the non-dual Absolute, and looks upon the world as the reflection of God, who is conceived as light. It emphasises the soul's exile from its maker and its inborn longing to return and lose itself in Him, in spite of other attractions. In Al-Ghazālī's work we have a synthesis of dogmatic theology and devotional mysticism. The Sūfis abstain from animal food and believe in rebirth and incarnation. A celebrated Sūfi of the seventeenth century Sabjani, it is said, 'abstained from flesh, venerated the mosques, performed in houses of idols according to the usage of the Hindus, religious rites in mosques, worship (pūja) and prostration after the manner of the Mussulmans'.<sup>1</sup> In his way of life he anticipated Rāmakṛṣṇa, the Hindu mystic of the nineteenth century.

Rūmī adopts the traditional examples of ancient Hindu thought when he advocates freedom of worship. He writes :

'The lamps are different, but the Light is the same : it comes from Beyond.

If thou keep looking at the lamp, thou art lost ; for thence arises the appearance of number and plurality.

Fix the gaze upon the Light, and thou art delivered from the dualism inherent in the finite body.

O thou who art the kernel of Existence, the disagreement between Moslem, Zoroastrian and Jew depends on the standpoint.

Some Hindus brought an elephant, which they exhibited in a dark shed.

<sup>1</sup> *Dabistan* : E.T. by Shea and Troyer, Vol. III, pp. 301-2.

As seeing it with the eye was impossible, every one felt it with the palm of his hand.

The hand of one fell on its trunk : he said, "This animal is like a water-pipe".

Another touched its ear : to him the creature seemed like a fan.

Another handled its leg and described the elephant as having the shape of a pillar.

Another stroked its back. "Truly", said he, "this elephant resembles a throne".

Had each of them held a lighted candle, there would have been no contradiction in their words'.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian form of Islam is moulded by Hindu beliefs and practices. The Shias are much nearer Hinduism than the Sunnis. The Khojas whose tenets are a mixture of Vaiṣṇava and Shia doctrines hold that Ali is the tenth incarnation of Viṣṇu. We find in India a number of communities of mixed descent. When later Muslim invaders from outside attacked India, Indian Muslims fought side by side with the Hindus and resisted them. When these invaders settled down in India, there were frequent feuds and instances are not wanting of Hindus fighting under Muslim leadership and Muslims fighting under Hindu leadership. The Muslims of India spoke the Indian languages, belonged to the same racial stock, adopted the occupational groupings and, within each class, the Hindus and the Muslims were often indistinguishable as they are today, in dress and manners, in ways of thought and behaviour. With the advent of the Moghuls, the imperial court became the meeting ground of Hindu and Muslim scholars who made themselves familiar with each other's cultures. In the eleventh century, the great Muslim scholar, Alberūni, mastered the Sanskrit language and left us an impressive account of the achievements of the Hindus in sciences and philosophy. India's spirit of comprehension and forbearance influenced the Moghuls and the cultural activities of India between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries illustrate Hindu-Muslim collaboration. In music and architecture, in painting

<sup>1</sup> E.T. by R. A. Nicholson in *Rūmī, Poet and Mystic* (1950) p. 166. (G. Allen & Unwin.)

and dancing, there was a notable synthesis of Hindu and Muslim ideas. The Hindus and the Muslims of India share a common past in literature, art, social forms and tradition of religious tolerance.

#### VIII. CHRISTIANITY

Christianity has flourished in India from the beginning of the Christian era. The Syrian Christians of Malabar believe that their form of Christianity is apostolic, derived directly from the Apostle Thomas. They contend that their version of the Christian faith is distinctive and independent of the forms established by St. Peter and St. Paul in the West. A heretical work of the third century called *The Acts of Thomas* tells us that the Apostle was unwilling to go to India, and thereafter the Lord contrived to sell him as a slave to Abbanes, the representative of Gondophares, the ruler of India. The whole story was dismissed as incredible until in 1834 a coin was found in the north-western corner of India bearing the name Gondophares. From this we can gather, not that the Apostle went to India in the first century—though it is not improbable—but that there were close relations between India and the Christians of Persia and Mesopotamia before the third century. What is obvious is that there have been Christians in the west coast of India from very early times. They were treated with great respect by the Hindus, whose princes built for them churches. The Right Reverend Stephen Neill, for some time the Bishop of Tinnevely, writing in the *Spectator*, observes: 'The Syrians are on an equality with the Nairs, the great Hindu landowning community; they regard themselves as superior to the other Hindu castes, and infinitely above the depressed classes'. The early Christians looked upon themselves as an integral part of the general Hindu community and discouraged proselytism.

Missionary propaganda for conversion to Christianity started with the establishment of European settlements in India. With a fervent faith in the divine character of his mission, Francis Xavier, one of the greatest of the Christian missionaries to the East, spread the Christian message in different parts of the East. He wrote to King Joao II: 'To your servants you must declare as plainly as possible . . . that the only way of escaping your wrath and of obtaining your favour is to make as many Christians as possible in the countries over which they rule'.

The efforts of Father de Nobile, to present Christianity in terms of Hindu thought, did not receive encouragement and Christian

missionaries thereafter carefully avoided any appearance of compromise with the Hindu faith. When the Portuguese power gave way to the Dutch and the English, trade became the main interest and the Protestants had little sympathy with the activities of the Catholic Church. The East India Company did not encourage missionary propaganda in territories under its control. When Protestant Churches in Europe were permeated by a spirit of evangelisation, missionary activities in India also increased. New societies were established and the campaign against Hinduism became so virulent that Lord Minto was forced to ban all preaching against Hinduism. He wrote to the Chairman of the Board of Directors: 'Pray read the miserable stuff addressed specially to the Gentoos (Hindus), in which without one word to convince or satisfy the mind of the heathen reader, without presenting argument of any kind, the pages are filled with hellfire, and hell fire and with still hotter fire, denounced against a whole race of men, for believing in the religion which they were taught by their fathers and mothers, and the truth of which it is simply impossible it should ever have entered into their minds to doubt. Is this the doctrine of our faith?' Fresh impetus was given to missionary activity when the Company's monopoly was abolished in 1813. Christian educational institutions were established in the chief centres of India and the governments became quite sympathetic to Christian evangelisation.

Hindu revival, the growth of nationalism, and the loss of prestige for religion in the West led the Christian leaders to manifest interest in Indian culture and assimilate it to the Christian teaching. When the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi made the abolition of untouchability one of its main objectives, the hopes of weaning away the Depressed Classes from the fold of Hinduism became slender.

The attitude of the ordinary Hindu to the Christian religion is one of sympathetic understanding and appreciation. Christianity has been with us from the second century A.D. It has not merely the rights of a guest but the rights of a native.

The younger sections of the converted Christians tend to regard themselves as the inheritors of the great Indian culture. Attempts to reconcile the inherited spiritual tradition of India with the acquired Christian doctrine on the lines of the reconciliation effected by the great scholastic thinkers between the Aristotelian tradition and the Christian dogma are being made by the more enterprising of the

Indian Christian leaders. Christianity which is already 'debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians'<sup>1</sup> may gain considerably by the insights of the Eastern religions.

#### IX. CHINA

Between India and the Far East there are certain common features such as strong family relationships, and reverence for ancestors. There is a community of thought and feeling fostered by Taoist and Buddhist teachings. Buddhism has been the great civilising power in the Far East for nearly twenty-five centuries shaping the mind of Asia, creating great philosophical movements and literatures in different languages including those of Central Asia. It tamed savage tribes with its doctrine of universal compassion towards all life and produced great art famous for its metaphysical teaching, psychological symbolism and ethical meaning. Recent political experiences have created a common Asian background.

Tao exists before all else. Tao is the way, the impartial rational law of things to which our conduct should conform if we desire to live in wisdom and peace. The secret of wisdom and peace is conformity to nature's ways. 'All things in nature work silently. They come into being and possess nothing. They fulfil their function and make no claim. All things alike do their work, and then we see them subside. When they have reached their bloom each returns to its origin. Returning to their origin means rest or fulfilment of destiny. This reversion is an eternal law. To know that law is wisdom'. Lao Tse says: 'If you do not quarrel, no one on earth will be able to quarrel with you. . . . Recompense injury with kindness. To those who are good, I am good, and to those who are not good I am also good; thus all get to be good. . . . The softest thing in the world dashes against and overcomes the hardest. . . . There is nothing in the world softer or weaker than water, and yet for attacking things that are firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it'. 'The female always overcomes the male by her stillness'.<sup>2</sup> The superior man is expected to transform others. 'To Tao all under heaven will come as streams and torrents flow into a great river or sea'.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese speak more of wisdom than of goodness, of the sage rather than the saint, the man of mature and quiet mind.

<sup>1</sup> Romans I, 14.

<sup>2</sup> II; LXI, 2. Legge: *Sacred Books of the East* XXXIX (1891) p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

Everything that comes into being does so in accordance with the order of Tao. It is the supreme principle which is superior to the twin principles of Yin and Yang. Yin is the female principle representing humidity, shadow, cold and contraction, while Yang is the male principle representing heat, sun, activity, expansion. The processes of nature and of man are explained by the activity of these two principles. They are, however, subordinate to the Tao in whom they find their unity and impulsion. Tao, by inciting the endless alternation of the two principles, is the motive force of the cosmos.

The Tao is described in negative terms as the Brahman of the Upanishads. 'The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao; the name that can be defined is not the unchanging name'.<sup>1</sup> To get to Tao is to rise above life and death, subject and object, time and space. Before time and at all times was a Being existing of itself, eternal, infinite, complete, omnipresent. To name it is impossible for human terms apply only to creatures perceptible to the senses. Now the Primordial Being is essentially not perceptible. Outside the Being, before the origin, there was nothing. It is called nothingness, mystery or Tao. Because it is described negatively or analogically, it is not to be confused with nullity. It is dynamism, upsurge, freedom. It is 'the spontaneity which moves the worlds'. Wisdom consists in renouncing all selfish desire and the sense of urgency and allowing oneself to be guided by it.

China's primary attention is centred, not so much on mastering the external world or on release from the discord of man's divided self but on the problems of social life, on proper political, economic and social relationships. Man, for the followers of Confucius, is neither a pure intellect nor is he simply a seeker of perfect adjustment with his inner nature. He is essentially a social being, seeking adjustment with fellowmen. Confucianism is more an ethical system, a social code than a religion. It yet rests on a religious foundation. Confucian ethics is based on the religious concept of Tao. Confucius says: 'Let a man die before sunset it doesn't matter, if only he has embraced the Tao in the morning'. 'As to the Tao, we must not be separated from it for a single moment'.<sup>2</sup> 'Perfection' for Confucius 'is the *Tao* of heaven. To seek perfection is the *Tao* of man'. Confucius feels that he is called by Heaven (*tien*) for his work and is dependent on it. The five relationships of (i) Ruler and minister

<sup>1</sup> *Tao Teh Ching*: Chap. I.

<sup>2</sup> See Reichelt: *Religion in Chinese Garment*, E.T. (1951) p. 34.



(ii) father and son (iii) husband and wife (iv) elder and younger brothers and (v) friend and friend were ordained by heaven. On their proper observance all personal and social happiness depends. They are a part of Tao.

Some of the sayings of the Chinese sages are distillations of wisdom useful for us living in an uneasy and shaken world. If we wish to order well the State, we must regulate our families; to regulate our families, we must cultivate ourselves; to cultivate the self, we must refine the heart. It is our duty, according to Confucius, to refine the heart, to restore the family and redeem the state. For Confucius, the source of sovereignty is the people. Any government that does not retain their confidence falls.<sup>1</sup>

Confucius puts special emphasis on Jen or the practice of altruism. 'Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you'. Jen, as preached by Confucius, implies respect for human personality, recognition of one's own and others' dignity, honesty, generosity and humane feeling.

In his *Analects*, Confucius says that he would prefer to be silent about the Ultimate. 'I would prefer not speaking'. His student Tzu-Kung asks, 'If you, O Master, do not speak, what shall we, your disciples, have to record and follow?' The master replied, 'Does the universe speak? The four seasons pursue their own course and all things are produced in their order, but does the universe say anything?' 'The doings of the supreme heaven have neither sound nor smell'.<sup>2</sup> The Confucian sage is akin to the *sthita-prajña* of the *Bhagavadgītā*.<sup>3</sup> Confucius says: 'I know how birds can fly, fishes swim and animals run. But the runner may be snared, the swimmer hooked, and the flyer shot by the arrow'. We must get detached from dependence on earthly possessions even as the dragon mounts through and over the clouds. The soldier did not occupy a recognised place in Chinese society. There is a well-known Chinese saying:

<sup>1</sup> When asked about government, Confucius said, 'The requisites of government are three: that there should be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment and the confidence of the people in the ruler'. Tzu-Kung said: 'If it cannot be helped, and one of these must be dispensed with, which of the three should be given up first?' 'The military equipment', said the Master. Tzu-Kung asked again, 'If it cannot be helped, and one of the remaining two must be dispensed with, which of them should be given up?' The Master answered: 'Part with the food. From of old, death has been the lot of all men, but if the people have no faith (in their rulers), there is no standing (for the state)'. *Analects*. XII, VII.

<sup>2</sup> *Doctrine of the Mean*: Ch. XXXIII.

<sup>3</sup> II.

Good iron isn't beaten into nails;  
A good man doesn't become a soldier.

The philosopher Mo Tsu, who lived at the end of the fifth century B.C., believes in a personal God, omniscient, omnipotent, moral. 'The great motive for good conduct ought to be fear of the Lord on high, who sees all that happens in the woods, the valleys, and the dark places where no human eye can penetrate. It is Him we must try to please. He desires good and hates evil. He loves justice and hates iniquity. All power on earth is subject to Him and must be exercised according to His views. He wishes the prince to be benevolent towards the people and all men to love one another, because He loves all men. He hates conquerors who make women widows and children orphans'. Mo Tsu summed up his teaching: 'Wisdom consists in adoring Heaven and loving men'.

The Chinese are not bound by a rigid creed which is proof against revision. Among the various religious systems of China there is a high degree of inter-relationship. Dr. Reichelt, a well-known Christian missionary and authority on Chinese Buddhism, writes: 'The Chinese are at the same time Confucianists, Taoists and Buddhists. This condition is given visible expression, not only in the circumstances that some of the divinities are to be found in all the religious systems, but also by the fact that in some of the smaller localities there are common temples, where the respective god images of the three religions are enthroned in full harmony. While the daily worship is connected with the ancestral tablets of the home, the average Chinese likes to visit some temple on special occasions, and whether they are Taoist or Buddhist makes no great difference. . . . If you press him, and question him more particularly about his philosophy of life as a whole, you are apt to hear many curious things—most often a loosely articulated system of thought, in which the old Chinese outlook, shaped according to Confucian pattern, has been loosely combined with a Buddhist philosophy of existence'.<sup>1</sup>

Freedom from dogma follows from the Chinese view of life. 'In life', say the Taoists, 'man is soft and tender; in death he is hard and tough'. Therefore it is said: 'the hard and tough are parts of death; the soft and tender are parts of life'.<sup>2</sup> The distinctive quality of the

<sup>1</sup> *Religion in Chinese Garment* (1951) p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Tao Teh Ching*: LXXVI. Chuang Tzu's advice is this: 'Do not seek precision. I myself have traversed it this way and that; yet still know only where it begins. I have roamed at will through its stupendous spaces. I know how to get to them, but I do not know where they end'. Arthur Waley: *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (1939) p. 79. (G. Allen & Unwin.)



living is openness, adaptability. We should not impose our ideas on others but let our ideas influence others and let our convictions be modified by others.

When Chinese classics reached Europe through the translations by Catholic Fathers, philosophers like Leibniz and Wolff proclaimed their value and significance.

#### X. CONFORMITY VERSUS FREEDOM IN RELIGION

If conformity to doctrines is to be regarded as the final test, believers in different creeds will be profoundly alien to one another; if modes of life are taken into account, religious men will be like one another. The view that our creed represents the truth and those who deny it are heretics who deserve to be liquidated, is a dangerous one.

It is a matter for surprise that we should be so confident about the nature of God and His relation to the world when our knowledge of things visible and tangible is so tentative and imperfect. It seems somewhat presumptuous to argue that only our Scripture or our organisation is absolute, infallible and divine and it alone can interpret and dispense divine teaching and grace.<sup>1</sup>

From the time of the *Rg Veda* till today, India has been the home of different religions and the Indian genius adopted a policy of live and let live towards them. It finds expression in the resolution of the Indian National Congress adopted on October 19, 1951: 'It has been the aim and declared policy of the Congress since its inception to establish a secular democratic state which, while honouring every faith, does not discriminate against any religion or community and gives equal rights and freedom of opportunity to all communities and individuals who form the nation. The Constitution of the Republic of India is based on this fundamental principle'.<sup>2</sup>

All religions help us to attain spiritual illumination. Because different paths seem to branch out before us, it does not follow that they all lead to different goals. After divergence of a few yards or a few miles, they may well reunite to form a single concrete highway to perfection.

Indian religions never quite understood the idea of exclusive

<sup>1</sup> Theologians define 'the nature of God Almighty with an accuracy from which most naturalists would shrink in describing the genesis of a black beetle'. Leslie Stephen: *An Agnostic's Apology and other Essays* (1893) p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Indian Constitution affirms 'The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them'. And again: 'All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion'.

worship. They are inclined to feel that we fall into error by refusing to comprehend simultaneously, apparently opposite truths, which are really complementary. Exclusion, fanatical denials are the causes of heresy. The truth is one and imposes itself on all those who know it provided they do know it with certainty. Here we are outside the particular points of view. Indian religious tradition admits all forms in which the single truth is reflected. Those who are centred in truth do not engage in polemics. Intolerance of differences, which is the hereditary enemy of the spirit, becomes impossible on this view. Proselytism is discouraged. When religion becomes organised, man ceases to be free. It is not God that is worshipped but the group or the authority that claims to speak in his name. Sin becomes disobedience to authority and not violation of integrity.

Those who are acquainted with the religious history of Europe do not understand the striking phenomenon of China and India, that sectarian differences do not have the same significance there as they have in the West. If one is a devotee of Viṣṇu, it would not occur to him to look upon his neighbour who worships Śiva as a heretic, doomed to everlasting perdition. These divinities represent different aspects of the Supreme. Chinese travellers of the early centuries of the Christian era give us accounts of crowds of Indian devotees of different sects meeting together and discussing ultimate problems or of universities run by teachers of different religious persuasions. The spirit in man has one aim in all mankind; different peoples approach it from different sides. The presence of the minorities of the Jews, the Syrian Christians and the Parsees in India from early times is the proof of the persistence of this attitude of tolerance.

This does not mean that development is not encouraged. Each traditional doctrine is an integrated structure and changes in it take place by development from within and not imposition from without. The different cults are the growth of centuries and are rooted in a soil of racial character moulded by ethical ideals. Violent changes may lead to disastrous results. But the influence of other religious views acts as a 'leaven' and brings about a spontaneous transformation. As the *gāyatrī* prayer suggests, each individual has to maintain a persistent endeavour to get behind the forms to that which is indicated by them. Complacency with forms is the chief vice of religious life. Today when different religions are facing one another, the Eastern attitude will insist that it is not necessary for one religion

to replace another. If we do not confuse spiritual realities with historical traditions, we will admit that the different religions may work in harmony for nourishing the spiritual life of mankind.

The attempts of the western powers to impose their culture on India through the Government and its educational institutions have stirred the huge inertia of the Indian people and ruffled the surface of Indian society, but deep down the immemorial tradition of India has not been greatly disturbed. The tumults of the surface are not to be mistaken for the break up of the central structure.

All over India there has been a revival of universal religion based on the central teachings of the Vedas including the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Brahma Sūtra*, which constitute the triple canon for Hinduism, the *prasthāna-traya*. Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833) found in the Upaniṣads a source of inspiration for the correction of the popular superstitious Hinduism. Dayānanda Sarasvati found in the hymns of the *Rg Veda* evidence of an ideal Aryan society free from the yoke of caste and untouchability. The Theosophical Society under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant gave to Hinduism a progressive and universal character. The Rāmakṛṣṇa movement which counts millions of lay adherents, stresses the mystical and social side of Hinduism. Rāmakṛṣṇa penetrated different religious forms and revealed their inner unity and spiritual equivalence. Bāl Gangādhār Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Mahātmā Gāndhī have used the *Bhagavadgītā* for the establishment of a regenerated Indian society.

During all these centuries, the people of India have evolved a culture and preserved it in an uninterrupted continuity. It is not a fixed concept but a living organism which has been growing in richness and content, adapting itself to changing conditions.

Peoples of different races, languages and cultures have met on the Indian soil and though we read of occasional clashes, they have settled down as members of a common civilisation whose primary characteristics are faith in an Unseen Reality of which all life is a manifestation, the primacy of spiritual experience, the relativity of rites and dogmas, a rigid adherence to intellectual norms and an anxiety for harmonising apparent opposites. Its ideals are recognised not so much as superstitions but as living truths capable of satisfying the spiritual needs of humanity. From the earliest times which stretch back to the age of Sumer, there has been scarcely a belief or a cult, a hope or a dream that has not found its home in India; yet her

spirit remains the same. Gāndhi said in *Young India*<sup>1</sup>: 'I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any'. India has been affected but not overcome by the influences of other cultures.

If India's solidarity has not been broken into parochial national movements, creating many political fatherlands in the areas in which different languages are spoken, as it happened in Europe, it is because of the firm hold of an ancient culture and external pressure, Muslim since the tenth century of the Christian era and European after the eighteenth.

India is the one country where we find temples, churches and mosques in peaceful co-existence. I have myself spoken in Hindu temples, Jewish synagogues, Buddhist monasteries, Christian churches and Muslim mosques without any compromise of my intellectual conscience or injury to my spiritual convictions. The spirit of catholic comprehension belongs to the religious tradition of India.

Indian culture has been built by the hands of numberless masters of compassion, raised by their suffering and built by their blood. As it traverses the centuries, it takes the colour of its soil. It bears the scars and stains of its long growth. It is at once both alluring and repulsive, startling us by its paradoxes and arresting us by its indestructible vitality. India has lived to see her contemporaries pass away and give place to successors of a younger generation some of whom in their turn passed away, while she is still kept alive. Though the lamp of her spirit flickered, it never went out.

Human thought is never a clear river; it generally carries a good deal of silt and in India today there is much silt that requires to be removed. Superstition is widespread. There are many who still believe in spirits and goblins. Even educated Indians are not always aware of the spirit of their culture, its achievements and its possibilities. Occupational differences have hardened into rigid castes. The practice of untouchability is an offence and a scandal to men of conscience. Many social forms are preserved, though the flow of life has been arrested. But these defects are not structural. They do not belong to its ideals. India can keep alive only if she does not idolise her institutions which no longer embody her ideals. Many of them have become like Ahalyā, the petrified substance of a once living person. By the touch of spirit we can make the stones alive. India today must take the risk of her own character.

<sup>1</sup> June 1, 1921.

## LECTURE TWO

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### WEST I

#### I. WESTERN CULTURE

Western culture derives its values and institutions from Greece, Rome and Palestine. Greece gave critical spirit, methods of observation and political concepts, Rome secular laws and principles of organisation and Palestine monotheism and the concept of man as a moral being subject to the commandments of God. Thought, action and faith are the three component elements of the Western tradition. We cannot say that these three attained a harmony at any stage of European history. They are still found in an unstable equilibrium. Athens put Socrates to death and practised slavery. Roman law did not curb the excesses of the Cæsars and the populace. The Christian Church struggled for earthly power. Today the threats of war and revolutions are the outward symptoms of the failure to impose organising principles on the anarchy of political institutions, the failure to govern conduct by the ideal of a universal society governed by law.

Greece, Palestine and Rome were greatly influenced by the East. Greece drew nourishment from the cultures of Asia Minor and Egypt. The spiritual ferment that brought forth the Judæan-Christian conception of God and man owed a great deal to the religious insights of the East which permeated the Jewish world in the centuries before Jesus. Christianity wove into its pattern the threads of earlier beliefs, the cult of Mithra and the reforms of Mani. The political and military organisation of the Germanic and Mongol invaders influenced the political structure of the West. Saracen Islam transmitted to Western culture, by way of Spain and Italy, part of the Hellenic heritage which the West had forgotten during the days of the Roman Empire. The Arabs contributed new scientific concepts which they devised by their own questing and observant attitude and thus prepared for the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

## II. GREECE AND THE EAST

When we speak of East and West in the historical or cultural sense, we should not be bound down by geographical conceptions. For the Greeks of the fifth century B.C., East or Asia meant Persia and West or Europe meant the Hellenic world.

We have different theories about the origin of language. The Jewish tradition makes Adam name the animals and ascribes the diversity of languages to the action of God who wished to stop the construction of the Tower of Babel. The naturalists believe in a progressive formation of language, inarticulate sounds and gestures being gradually transformed into linguistic elements. Others hold that language arose through an imitation by man of the sounds he heard in nature. Whatever the origin of language may be, language indicates the power of abstraction which the animal lacks. Through language, communication and co-operation are made possible. It is a social pattern characteristic of a human group.

When a century and a half ago, European Orientalists like Sir William Jones introduced to Western scholars Sanskrit, its kinship with Greek, Latin and other European languages became apparent. Sanskrit and Persian, Armenian, Albanian, the Slavonic languages, Greek, Latin, the Teutonic languages (Norse, Swedish, German and Anglo-Saxon) and the Celtic languages (Welsh, Erse and Gaelic) were all related in vocabulary, flexion and syntax even as French, Italian, Portuguese, Roumanian and Spanish were related to one another. Are all these languages derived from a common parent speech spoken by an historical people, or are they different dialects which had more points of agreement than of divergence? Did the different languages split up by a process of fission from one common speech or did they shade off into one another, representing 'a continuum of diverging dialects'.<sup>1</sup> Whatever be the explanation, the similarities illustrate the degree of agreement reached by many distinct peoples in the matter of economic organisation, social structure and religious development. Among these peoples a certain degree of spatial contiguity may be presupposed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The European Inheritance* (1954) Vol. I, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Professor V. Gordon Childe writes: 'It would be absurd to suggest that any two tribes living, say, in Greece and India and speaking quite unconnected dialects on reaching the same level of development should have hit upon such similar words for "father", "fall", and "five" and inflected them in such similar ways as the Vedic Indians and the Homeric Greeks did in fact do. The primitive culture must be the stage of development reached by the several peoples while living sufficiently close together to communicate'. Ibid. p. 84. Hittite,



When we first meet them, the Vedic Indians and the Homeric Greeks seem to have reached an approximately similar stage of social development. Agriculture, hunting, fishing were known to them both. Horses were socially important. Wheeled vehicles were in use as the word 'wheel', 'nave', 'axle', 'yoke' indicate. Water transport through 'boat' and 'paddle' was known. Wool was spun and woven. Tools and weapons, hammers, axes and arrows normally made of stone were in use. Copper was known. Clans were patrilineal; government was in the hands of chiefs and kings. Villages were sometimes protected by a rampart. A Sky God (Jupiter, Zeus pater, Dyaus pitā) was worshipped with sacrifices. These names as well as the old High German Ziu and Old Norse Tyr derive from the common root 'to shine'. Varuṇa is Ouranos, Uṣas becomes Eos. The *aśvins*, horsemen, inseparable twins, bright lords of brilliance and lustre, are the Dioscuri whose functions were to protect gods and help men. Eros, Kāma, was the first of the gods in Hesiod.<sup>2</sup> The worship of the heavenly bodies is common to the Veda and Homer. Earth and Heaven are treated by both as the parents of the gods. The Vedic *rta*, the law of nature, is found in the Greek *dike*. The Greeks sought the Divine inside the world. Their religion was one in which the most important powers and phenomena of nature were personified and treated as gods.

These similarities suggest that the two peoples, the ancient Greeks and the Vedic Indians, must have been in communication with each other though neither possessed any recollection of those times and they met as strangers within the Persian Empire.

The Greeks were familiar with other civilisations, the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Persian and the Hebrew, but counted them among barbarians for they thought they did not live according to the principles of reason. The Egyptians took delight in preserving dead bodies. The Assyrians could not read or write and their gods were half animal. The Jews were ritualists and the Persians did not know the meaning of freedom. The Greeks felt like a few sane men living in a world of madmen and constantly endangered by the infection of madness. The pressure of barbarism was real to them, not only from around them but from within.

which is the first European language to be expressed in writing and preserved, differs in syntax, grammar and vocabulary from Sanskrit, Greek or Lithuanian. This 'may mean that their ancestors were separated from the rest by geographical or political barriers before they had advanced to the assumed stage'.  
p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> For Empedocles, love is the efficient cause of every union of cosmic forces.

On occasions, the Greeks called themselves the pupils of the old civilisations of Egypt and of Mesopotamia. While their debt to the non-Greeks is considerable, it does not take away from the originality of the Greek genius which took ideas from others and altered them in the process of adapting them to its own mentality. As we shall see, when they took over Christian truths, they adapted them to their own idiom. Of the Greeks, Plato said: 'We may take it that whatever the Greeks inherit from the other races, in the end they turn it into something better'.<sup>1</sup>

Plato records in the *Timæus* that the Egyptians looked upon the Greeks as children. Plato idealised the stability of the Egyptian culture, as he was nearing the breakdown of the Hellenic society.<sup>2</sup> The Pyramids are a mighty architectural effort of the human race, a grand achievement of planning and execution. The temples of Egypt still stand as a witness to the belief in God of the earliest inhabitants of the Nile Valley. The worship has continued at Luxor for over thirty-five centuries. Only the name has changed with the passing of time, Amon, Jesus, Allāh. The feeling that prompts the worship is still there and the place is as sacred now as it was fifteen hundred years before Christ. The Egyptians of 5000 years ago had exalted conceptions of ethical behaviour. At the point of death their average gentleman wished it to be known by gods and fellowmen that he had been virtuous, i.e. compassionate. In their confessions, they claimed, again and again, that they had been generous and kind, good neighbours: 'I gave the widow as large a portion as the woman who had the husband. I did not prefer the great to the small'. In words as sublime as those of any religion, the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* describes the quality of virtue: 'I have never caused any one to weep. I have never spoken with a haughty voice. I have never made any one afraid. I have never been deaf to words of justice and truth'.<sup>3</sup> An exalted ideal of ethical behaviour guided those early men of conscience.

The Greeks were indebted to Egypt for her philosophy and literature. It is said that Thales, Solon, Pythagorus, Democritus of Abdera and Plato visited Egypt and learnt from Egyptian priests though

<sup>1</sup> *Epinomis* 987 d.

<sup>2</sup> *Timæus* 21A-25D.

<sup>3</sup> In the Prologue to the Code of Hammurabi, it is said: 'At that time the gods called me, Hammurabi, the servant whose deeds are pleasing, who helped his people in time of need, who thought about plenty and abundance, . . . to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak, . . . to enlighten the land and further the welfare of the people'.



there is not much historical evidence for this view. We may be certain, however, that the Greeks were stimulated to their literary achievement by the thought and influence of Egypt and Babylonia. Greece was indebted to Egypt for the technique of writing and her writing material.<sup>1</sup>

What is distinctive of the Greeks was their faith in the power of human reason. They attempt to give rational justification for their ethical and religious views. Their mind was of a dialectical order. Restricting the field of human thought, the Greeks substitute the rational for the real, the scientific for the metaphysical point of view.

The difference between the Greek and the barbarian is not one of colour or race. It related to the quality of mind. While the Greek possessed boundless faith in the superiority of his culture, he was, relatively speaking, free from racial intolerance. If the barbarians acquired Greek culture they were accepted as Greeks. St. Paul, for example, though born and bred a Jew, gave up its rituals and exclusiveness and accepted Greek culture. Members of subject races were admitted to citizenship and social equality, if they adopted the Greek language and the Greek way of life.

The Greeks rated the improvement and enjoyment of the powers of the mind higher than the acquisition of wealth or power. They were the teachers of Europe. They were distinguished by their rationalist and positivist attitude towards nature. For them philosophy and science were almost the same. Till the beginning of the nineteenth century, the term 'philosophy' included all that we now treat as science. While philosophy aims at building up a system of related ideas as such with slight references to factual observation, the element of factual observation is central in science.

Thales (625-545 B.C.), the first recognised philosopher of Greece, was also the founder of the beginnings of geometry and astronomy. Many others of his age were philosophers and scientists, who interpreted the world by tracing it to some ultimate principle like water, air or four indefinite elements. Pythagoras (582-500 B.C.) was a great scientist. By the discovery of order and harmony in the world, he satisfied the emotional nature of man. He illustrated the presence of law in the universe by his right triangle theorem, the cord length,

<sup>1</sup> 'The vehicle by which Greek literature was preserved and transmitted from the earliest times until perhaps the second or third century after Christ was the papyrus roll. Alike in respect of form and of material, this was an import from Egypt, where it had been in use from a very remote time'. *Companion to Greek Studies* (p. 606) quoted in *The Legacy of Egypt* (1947) p. 54.

proportions of tones and the concept of the spherical earth. Pythagoras did not, like his predecessors, search for a principle but stressed the specific relations or laws which govern the universe. He derived satisfaction from the harmony of the spheres which was not to him a mere poetic image. Anaxagoras (506-428 B.C.) substituted mind for the tangible first principles of his Ionian predecessors. He introduced a non-phenomenal first cause to account for the phenomenal world.

The famous warning of Plato (427-347 B.C.) at the gate of the Academy indicates his love of mathematics. The most influential scientist among the Greeks was Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). He was primarily an empirical philosopher who assembled facts and organised them in the whole field of science. He is often called the founder of modern science. He founded logic, zoology and botany. He wrote on physics and poetics, psychology and cosmology, astronomy, geography, ethics and politics. The Hippocratic school of medicine arose about this time. The Greek mind is responsible for endowing Western culture with the spirit of science. It gave to the West discipline, intellectual and moral.

The Greek Logos reflected an awareness of proportion, harmony and measure. Greek art clung to this world in its desire to give expression to its æsthetic tastes. The Greeks lavished their skill in the representation of human, animal and plant kingdoms. Greek art is humanist as distinguished from say, Indian art, which aims to reach after something unattainable, something beyond and above oneself.

Man's dignity as a rational being requires him to subject political and religious institutions to reasoned criticism. In the political field the Greek sought for an intelligible order and revolted against despotism and opted for a society which is aware of itself as a community and free to make its laws. The citizen who possesses reason is free and is subject to laws which he himself makes.

The Greek was jealous of every institution that interfered with the free exercise of individual initiative. His failure to create and work effective political institutions except in the sphere of local government is the outcome of his exaggerated individualism. The Greeks fought the Persians as free men aware of their freedom against the unlimited power of an absolute monarch.

The development of Greece was the development of *polis*, the city. Greece was a collection of cities, each a free, independent, sovereign state. These cities fought one another and within the cities

there were class struggles so much so that when, in the fourth century B.C., Æneas Tacitus wrote a manual for commanders of besieged cities, he warned that the enemy within the wall would be as dangerous as the enemy without.

Unfortunately, the Greek mind did not cast off the shackles that bound politics and economics to the customs of primitive society. Free Greeks held large classes as slaves.

The Greek city states did not know how to impose an organising principle on their anarchy. They did not rise to the conception of a Greek nation; they did not unite in a state that could have tackled the problems that faced them. The aggressive nationalism which is still retarding the ambiguous history of human progress is an inheritance from Greece.

Rationalism, humanism and civic virtues characterised the Greeks. Homer, Æschylus, Aristophanes, Pericles, Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle, Pindar, Simonides are the representatives of Greek humanism.

Jacob Burckhardt, concluding one of his lectures about Greek art with some reflections on the sadness expressed in the faces of the marble images of the Greek gods, made the Vatican Hermes say: 'You are astonished that I am so sad, I, one of the Olympians living in perpetual bliss and immortal joy? Indeed, we possessed everything: glory, heavenly beauty, eternal youth, everlasting pleasure, and yet we were not happy. . . . We lived only for ourselves and inflicted suffering on all others. . . . We were not good and hence we had to perish'. The problems of history are very simple and yet very elusive. Any intelligent Greek could have anticipated that the Peloponnesian war would have delivered both the victors and the vanquished into the hands of foreign foes. Such is human nature that Athens and Sparta would not unite and their fratricidal strife helped no one but the Persians and the Macedonians. As the Greeks did not solve, what appears to us, their simple problem, they were caught between the millstones of Macedonian and Roman power. The bane of the Greeks was their inability to combine.

There were other societies to carry on the tradition of civilisation in that period. Today the case is different. A war with modern weapons of mass destruction would mean general suicide if not the extinction of all life on earth. When passions run high, a rational fear of the consequences cannot be relied on to preserve peace. The burden of the past is heavy on the mind of the world. If we fail to

get together, it is not due to lack of knowledge but to a faltering of morals, a failure of spirit. If we realise that the choice before us is either understanding or extinction and work for the former, the gods we worship may be happy and not sad as the Olympian gods were.

The Greeks had a conception of religion which is not confined to state worship and conventional piety. There is a break through of a spirit quite distinct from the classical spirit, a yearning aspiration for the Unseen Reality, a turning away from the forms of this world. This tradition which is unlike standard Greek thought and so like the philosophy of the Upaniṣads is to be found in the Orphic and the Eleusinian mysteries, in Empedocles (500-430 B.C.), Pythagoras and Plato, who all accept the doctrine of rebirth, fall from a high estate, the present condition of exile and the possibility of regaining the original condition of purity and bliss by means of ascetic practices. The affinity of thought between this tradition and the Upaniṣads need not imply any identity of origin.

The Eleusinian mysteries were celebrated in honour of Demeter, the Mother of Life. Worship of Demeter in the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean goes, according to Sir John Myers, 'as far back as either records or monuments carry us'. Speaking of the ancient pre-Indo-European culture of Anatolia, Sir John Myers observes: 'Wherever that culture penetrates there seem to go intimately associated with it those gross female figurines which express the kind of nature-worship which finds classical expression in the cults of the 'Great Mother of Asia', in complete contrast with the father-gods who are central in all unsophisticated forms of the Indo-European religion'.<sup>1</sup> The Mother Goddess is the embodiment of the fruitful earth, the giver of life and fertility to plants, animals and men.

Again, Dionysiac religion descended on Greece from Thrace in post-Homeric times as a foreign intrusion and was met with considerable opposition. It was an orgiastic religion involving belief in possession by the god whereby, for a fleeting instant, under the influence of torches, wine, music and dancing, the worshipper felt lifted out of himself and exalted to the plane of the divine. Dionysius was a god of ecstasy and his *orgia* took place at night,<sup>2</sup> and women were the most frequent and characteristic worshippers. The end is

<sup>1</sup> In *European Civilisation* ed. by Eyre (1935) pp. 150, 241. The worship of the Mother-Goddess is to be met with in the Indus and the Vedic civilisations.

<sup>2</sup> Euripides: *Bacchae*, 486.

an experience. The Homeric hymn to Demeter says: 'Blessed is the man who has *seen* these things'. Ecstasy and belief in immortality are the contributions of the Thracian religion. Thracians spoke an Indo-European tongue and believed that the soul of man is potentially divine.

Orpheus, whatever may have been his origin, appears in Greek history as a prophet and teacher whose doctrine was embodied in a collection of writings. References to this doctrine are found in Greek writings of the sixth to the fourth century B.C., Empedocles, Euripides (484-407 B.C.),<sup>1</sup> Plato,<sup>2</sup> Pindar (522-443 B.C.), and the gold plates from the South Italian graves. From these varied sources we gather that the Orphic way of life enjoined ascetic practices, abstention from meat, salvation by initiation. It taught that the just were rewarded with bliss and the unjust met with punishment. In the tablets found on the Orphic graves, the dead man's soul is addressed in the words: 'From a man thou hast become a god'. Referring to the Orphic rite, Professor F. M. Cornford observes: 'The supreme means of grace is the sacramental feast in which the soul feeds on the substance of the god who suffered, died and rose again and thereby is assured of ultimate deliverance from the cycle of rebirth'.<sup>3</sup> Those initiated in the mysteries are said to be reborn. They become the kinsmen of the gods. The essential act is a seeing, a beholding. The mysteries contrast the blessed lot of him who has experienced them and the unfortunate mortal who has not.<sup>4</sup>

The Eleusinian, the Dionysiac and the Orphic cults taught a doctrine quite different in spirit from that of the Homeric religion. Before the Homeric gods men have only to abase themselves. The relations between gods and men are external. There can be no communion with the gods. Men cannot aspire to become divine as they are essentially inferior to them. Pindar says: 'Seek not to become Zeus'. 'For mortals a mortal lot is right', he continues. Again: 'Mortal minds must seek what is fitting at the hands of the gods, knowing what lies at our feet, and to what portion we are born. Strive not, my soul, for an immortal life, but use to the full the

<sup>1</sup> In the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, Theseus taunts his son with the ascetic life he leads through having taken Orpheus for his word. In the *Alcestis*, the chorus laments that 'they have found no remedy for the blows of fate, no charm on Thracian tablets which tuneful Orpheus carved out'.

<sup>2</sup> *Cratylus* 402b; *Philebus* 66c. *Laws* 2 669d; 8 829d. *Republic* 2 364e; *Ion* 536b.

<sup>3</sup> *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. IV (1926) p. 538.

<sup>4</sup> See *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III.8.10.

resources that are at thy command'.<sup>1</sup> The Chorus in Euripides' *Bacchæ* exclaim that 'the cleverness of men is no real wisdom if it means forgetting their mortality'.<sup>2</sup>

Mystery religions believe in the possibility of a union between the worshipper and the object worshipped. In the Dionysian ecstasy, the individual soul feels itself lifted out of its loneliness so that, at the height of its passionate experience, it calls itself Bacchos, one with the god by whom it is inspired. This ritual gives only a temporary exhilaration. For the Orphics, belief in the latent divinity of the human soul is central. When the soul reaches its final embodiment, it will return no more to a body. It says: 'I have flown out of the sorrowful weary circle'. 'God am I, mortal no longer'. The Mystery religions insisted on the way of suffering, that it is the law of life, that the agony of the soul is essential for the realisation of human dignity. The Orphic cosmogony uses the world-egg, an idea common in the *Rg Veda* and the concept of the soul's journey toward salvation. While the Greeks did not develop a passionate devotion to a universal faith but believed in a number of powers and gods, human in their conduct, feeble in their control of passions, the Orphics proclaimed one all-pervasive spiritual truth. 'Zeus is beginning, middle and end' is a well-known Orphic saying.<sup>3</sup> From the stress on the ascetic way of life, from the belief in rebirth and release from the wheel of becoming, from the emphasis on the possibility of union of man with God and other details about taboos, etc. which are neither Hellenic nor Semitic, a case is made out for foreign influence, possibly Indian, on the Orphic religion.<sup>4</sup>

Greek society as a whole did not accept the mystery religions which were treated as something parenthetical and alien. Religion was run by the State in its own interests. As a citizen, every one must do his duty by the State. As a householder, he may have his private worship of Hermes and Apollo. As the mystery religions were

<sup>1</sup> E.T. by W. K. C. Guthrie: *The Greeks and their Gods* (1950) pp. 113-14.

<sup>2</sup> 995ff.

<sup>3</sup> Warner Jaeger: *The Theology of Early Greek Philosophers* (1947) p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> There seems much to be said for thinking with L. von Schroeder and Furtwangler that the ethical essence of the Orphic doctrine was due to Pythagoras drawing from Indian sources'. Conway: *Ancient Study and Modern Religion* (1933) pp. 27-8. Cp. Mayer: 'Egyptian, Persian and Indian cultural influences were absorbed into the Greek world from very early times'. *Political Thought* (1939). There is evidence of close connection between Greece and India which were for a period parts of the Persian Empire. Herodotus (III. 91-3) mentions in the list of peoples that were subject to Darius those occupying the Indian frontier.



essentially personal and undermined the authority of the State, they were treated as superstition and not religion.

The mystery religions are traced to non-Greek Asian influences, and are said to be of pre-Greek origin on which the Homeric gods were imposed.<sup>1</sup> The cult of Dionysus comes 'from Asia's land' as Euripides' *Bacchæ* says. The stress on the non-Greek origin of this cult pervades the whole play. In answer to a question of Pentheus, the disguised Dionysus says: 'Every barbarian (non-Greek) observes these rites and dances'. 'Yes', replies Pentheus, 'for they are far more foolish than the Hellenes'. 'Nay, wiser in this though their customs are different'. The cult was soon naturalised by the Greeks who, with their fertile imagination, made mother Symelo into a Theban princess, Thebes being, in their belief, the first Grecian city to receive rites. Herodotus is of the view that Dionysus came to Greece from Egypt.<sup>2</sup> While the mystery religions inculcated respect for all cults and were non-dogmatic in temper, the Homeric or Olympian religion tended to be exclusive.<sup>3</sup>

In Pythagoras we have a conscious attempt to synthesise the mystic and the rationalist tendencies. His thought is based on the exaltation of *peras*, limit and shows a passionate devotion to form and law. The universe is a *kosmos*. Only by understanding the order

<sup>1</sup> Nilsson, in his book *Homer and Mycenæ*, observes: 'The great antitheses in Greek religion are of a racial character, the emotional and mystical forms of religion being of pre-Greek origin'. p. 80. See, however, A. W. Gomme in *European Civilisation* ed. Eyre L. (1935) p. 536. 'It is unscientific to divide Greek civilisation, and in particular Greek religion into two elements and label the one Indo-European, Hellenic, late, the other non-Indo-European, non-Hellenic Aegean, corresponding to the two (as though there could be only two) racial elements in the country; still more, to say when the former was introduced, or even that it is later than the other. . . . There had been an Indo-European conquest of Greece, but of quite uncertain date'.

Farnell believes that Greek religion was essentially political and non-mystic. He says, 'I wish merely to indicate the absence in pure Hellenic speculation of any elaborated system of theosophy, such as the late Egyptian 'gnoses till we come to Neo-Platonism, when the Greek intellect is no longer pure. We discover also a vacuum in the religious mind and nomenclature of the earlier Greek; he had neither the concept nor any name to express the concept of what we call "faith", the intellectual acceptance and confessional affirmation of certain dogmas covering the divinity, and in this respect he differed essentially not only from the Christian, but also from the Iranian and the Buddhistic votary'. *Greece and Babylon* (1911) pp. 23-4.

<sup>2</sup> Dionysus is reported to have said: 'Leaving the lands of Lydia rich in gold and of Phrygia . . . I have come first to this city of the Greeks, to set them dancing here and establish my mysteries'.

<sup>3</sup> Macaulay's comment is well known: 'The spirit of the two most famous nations of antiquity was remarkably exclusive. . . . The fact seems to be that the Greeks only admired themselves and that the Romans admired only themselves and the Greeks'. *History in Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. I (1860) p. 263.



of the microcosm can man hope to imitate it and implant a similar order in the microcosm. Man must become orderly in his soul. Pythagoras felt that the real and comprehensible nature of things is found in proportion and number. For him, mathematics and music are related. Apollo is the god of the lyre. Pythagoras founded a religious brotherhood with a definite rule of life whose aim was expressed in the word *katharsis*. It is to be achieved partly by the observance of certain taboos and by philosophy. Pythagoras adopts the doctrine that 'we are strangers in this world and the body is the tomb of the soul, and yet that we are not to escape by self-murder; for we are the chattels of God who is our herdsman and without His command we have no right to make our escape'.<sup>1</sup> His views on rebirth, the prohibition of the slaughter of animals, vegetarian diet, purification by ascetic practices, insistence on *theoria* or contemplation are more Indian than Greek.

Empedocles tells us that he remembers his past births and advises meditation as the means for attaining truth. The souls of the righteous ascetics regain their divine status. Empedocles says: 'At the end they became seers and bards and chiefs and physicians among mortal men, and finally, they blossom forth as gods highest in honour'.<sup>2</sup> He greeted his fellow-citizens with the exultant cry: 'All hail! I go about among you an immortal god, no longer a mortal'.<sup>3</sup>

The greatest figure of Greece, Socrates, founded no school, left no writings, taught no doctrine. There is a Socratic way of life but not a Socratic doctrine. He met men in the market place, questioned them about their views, taught them to think, compared his function to that of a midwife who brought other men's thoughts to birth. Socrates gave the Western man the assurance that he has a soul, something which is the seat of his normal waking intelligence and moral character, that it is the most important thing about man and he should make the most of it. He speaks to his friends in his dying hour that the soul is imperishable and untouched by death. It did not begin with the body, nor will it cease when the body is dead. Socrates' last statement, 'I am not an Athenian or a Greek but a citizen of the world', is well known.

The soul, for Plato, is the most important part of the individual,

<sup>1</sup> J. Burnet: *Early Greek Philosophy* (1930) p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> B. 146. Diels quoted by A. N. Marlow in *Philosophy East and West*, April 1954, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Fragment* 112.4.

for it belongs in essence to the eternal world, not to the transitory. It has had many lives. Death is not an evil but a release from imprisonment in the body, enabling it to fly back to the world of ideas with which it had conversed before its life on earth. Just before birth, it has drunk of the waters of Lethe and forgotten all or most of its knowledge of the other world. Through the perception of objects here, it is dimly reminded of the full and perfect knowledge which it once had. All knowledge acquired in this world is recollection. When the soul is enabled to rise above the world of sense, it regains its awareness of the perfect forms. The aim of man should be 'the completest possible assimilation to God'.<sup>1</sup> Philosophy, for Plato, is a preparation for death, in that it fits the soul to stay permanently in the world of the Ideas instead of being condemned to return once more to the limitations of a mortal frame.

While Plato accepts the Socratic principle that knowledge is virtue, he means by knowledge, not knowledge of the world of sense but the knowledge of the transcendent world, of ultimate realities which are called Ideas of which the world of sense is a faint reflection. The crown and sum of the Ideas is the Idea of good which is God. We can know God not by perception or learning but by a spiritual rebirth, by becoming like unto God. The moving energy of man's soul is *eros*, love, which rises through different stages until it becomes a passion for that Divine Beauty which is Truth itself.

Plato's view of reality is not the traditional Greek view. The body is the tomb of the soul and the soul becomes truly itself, when it takes leave of the body and is itself alone.<sup>2</sup> Then it reaches out toward reality and attains truth. When it attains this transcendent state, after its long cycle of wanderings, it dwells immortal and changeless. The truth is always in our soul but the ordinary man is not aware of it and is not truly awake.<sup>3</sup>

Plato distinguishes two kinds of prophecy; one is the conscious art of the augur who has learned how to interpret signs and omens, telling the will of the gods from the flight of the birds or the entrails of a sacrificial victim. He remains perfectly self-possessed though he has acquired certain skills (*technē, siddhī*) by which he claims to be able to read what heaven has to say. The other is the prophecy of inspiration. The prophet is not himself. He is possessed by the god

<sup>1</sup> *Theatetus* 176b.

<sup>2</sup> *Phaedo* 65A.

<sup>3</sup> *Meno* 80E.

and becomes for the time being his mouthpiece. The Pythian Prophetess of Apollo was of this sort.<sup>1</sup> Athanasia in the *Symposium* reminds us of the doctrine of mokṣa or spiritual freedom in the Upaniṣads.

There is a distinction, as in the Upaniṣads, between the Absolute Principle (Brahman) which is the Idea of the good in the *Republic* and the Demiurj, the personal God and Creator or (Īśvara) or the soul of the universe (Hiranyagarbha)<sup>2</sup> in the *Timaeus*. In his Academy the three original principles the One, the first cause, the reason or the Logos and the Soul or the Spirit of the universe were represented as three gods bound to each other by an ineffable generation. The Logos specially was conceived as the son of the Eternal Father and the creator and governor of the world.

Socrates in Plato's *Republic* describes the ideal commonwealth and when asked where such a commonwealth is to be found, he admits that there is no state on earth which corresponds to that ideal: 'But in heaven perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up for him who desires to behold, and beholding to found such a city in his own soul. It make no difference whether it exists anywhere or even will exist. For he would live in the ways of that city only and of no other'.<sup>3</sup> In the *Republic* we find, reason, spirit and appetite are made the basis of the class structure which reminds us of the Indian caste system.

In addition to the doctrines of inspiration, rebirth, there are Plato's use of the simile of the charioteer and the horses, the grades of consciousness,<sup>4</sup> which have striking similarities to the teaching of the Upaniṣads.

There is a conflict in Plato's soul between the Homeric and the Orphic tendencies.<sup>5</sup> Plato 'derived the main doctrine, together with most of the details of his Eschatological myths directly and through

<sup>1</sup> See *Phaedrus* 244 a-d. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* III.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Principal Upaniṣads* (1953) pp. 52-72. (George Allen & Unwin Ltd.)

<sup>3</sup> 1.592n.

<sup>4</sup> The different grades of consciousness as set forth in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* is found in Plato. 'Nay, I go further, and say that if we are half of our lives asleep, and the other half awake, in each of these periods our minds are convinced that whatever opinions present themselves to us, these are really and certainly true, so we insist on the truth of both alike'. *Theatetus* 153d.

<sup>5</sup> Professor J. A. Stewart writes: 'Plato's chief interest undoubtedly was in the ideal of personal salvation which he derived mainly from the Orphic religion; and it was exactly this Orphic element in Platonism which constituted by far the most important part of its influence on subsequent philosophy, and more especially, on the development of Christian doctrine and practice'. *The Myths of Plato* (1905) p. 355.

Pindar from Orphic sources'.<sup>1</sup> Orphic beliefs made a strong appeal to Plato. In the mind of Plato, Homer was struggling with Orpheus, mind with spirit.

In his *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says that man's chief end is 'to put off mortality as far as possible'.<sup>2</sup> He argues: 'Where there is a better there must be a best'. Man's highest nature is identical with God's. 'Cultivate it and emulate the immortal'.

All knowledge begins with sensations. Some creatures possess memory also, which is defined as the persistence of sense impressions in the psyche; others are gifted with *logos*, the faculty of systematising the remembered impressions. The instruments of thought are said to be two, *episteme* or knowledge acquired by reasoning from premises and *nous* which is the highest category of mind, a kind of intuitive insight. In the third book of his treatise, *On the Soul*, Aristotle mentions that most of our knowledge is derived from the bodily senses, and the use of reason which draws conclusions from sense-perceptions but added that there was also knowledge of a different type. Though Aristotle does not mention the source of this knowledge, his commentator Aphrodisas traces it to God.

There are two currents of philosophic thought in Greece, separate in origin and divergent in tendency, one founded by Thales which had its centre in Ionian Miletus and the other established by Pythagoras in the Western colonies of Southern Italy and Sicily, which were also the strongholds of Orphism. The former was rationalistic, sceptical and gave rise to the naturalism which reached its development in the atomism of Democritus and the hedonism of Epicurus. The latter, which found its expression in Pythagoras, Empedocles, Socrates, Plato<sup>3</sup> and Aristotle, Stoics, neo-Platonism, influenced Christianity a great deal.

By their incurable discords among themselves, Athens, Sparta and Thebes, they could not save their independence.<sup>4</sup> Demosthenes (c. 426 B.C.), to save the independence of Greece from the Macedonian domination, advised alliance with the Persians. Isocrates

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell: *History of Western Philosophy* (1946) (Allen & Unwin) p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> X.11 77b, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Plato 'derived the main doctrine, together with most of the details of his eschatological myths directly and through Pindar from Orphic sources'. J. A. Stewart: *The Myths of Plato* (1905) pp. 65-6. Bertrand Russell calls the Platonic Socrates 'the perfect Orphic saint'. *History of Western Philosophy* (1946) p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus (484-425 B.C.) bewailed 'that ancient malady of the Greeks, which causes them ever to be at strife with one another by which process Hellas was weakened and became the sport of Macedon and the slave of Rome'.

(470-399 B.C.), who gave us the famous definition that the mark of the Hellene was his culture rather than his blood, was prepared to accept the rule of Philip of Macedon to save Greece from subjection to Persia.

### III. ALEXANDER'S CONQUESTS

Alexander's conquests were far and wide. He was of a mystic temperament. When in Egypt, he visited the temple of Ammon at Siwah and entered the inner shrine alone with the priest. Though what happened there is unknown, it is clear that Alexander felt that he was in a special relation to God and had a divine mission to be the reconciler of the world. Helped by his Macedonian background, he acted against the Greek policy of exclusiveness. Though he started with his teacher Aristotle's belief that the Asians were only fit to be slaves, he discarded it when he met the peoples of Asia, Iran and North West India. He adopted various measures to develop comradeship among peoples. All people in his realm should be partners, not subjects. He appointed Iranian satraps, set up a mixed army and encouraged intermarriages on a large scale. He declared that all men were sons of one Father and they should work for human brotherhood.<sup>1</sup> Alexander looked forward to the marriage of East and West in a world religion which will include in itself the best of all faiths.

The two-way traffic between East and West became possible after Alexander broke down the frontiers which had hitherto separated them. He tried to carve out an empire which would combine the Eastern and the Hellenic civilisations. Shortly before his death, to celebrate the end of the great war, he gave a banquet to 9000 men representing not only the Greeks but all the races in his empire. After the banquet the whole company made a libation together which was a religious act and the ceremony concluded with Alexander's prayer for peace, for the partnership in the realm of the peoples there assembled and for all the peoples of the world to be of one mind and live in amity and concord. All men being brothers, should live together in *homo-noia*, in unity of mind and heart.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch says of Alexander: 'Aristotle had advised him to be a leader to Greeks but a master to barbarians caring for the former as friends and relatives, but treating the latter as animals or plants . . . but he acted otherwise, for he believed that he had a mission from God to harmonise men generally and to be the reconciler of the world, compelling those he could not persuade and bringing men from everywhere into unity, mixing their lives and customs and marriages and social ways as if in a loving-cup. *Moralia* 329 A.C. 330E.

Alexander created the Hellenistic world which taught Rome and through Rome the modern world. He carried Hellenic culture to the banks of the Indus, after having given it to the eastern Mediterranean. He was greatly impressed by the austerities of the Indian ascetics. His Græco-Bactrian successors kept alive Greek culture for three centuries in Afghanistan and the Panjab. Chandragupta (reigned 321-296 B.C.) married a Syrian princess and kept up friendly relations with Seleucus.<sup>1</sup> An amusing correspondence was kept up between Bindusāra and Seleucus. Bindusāra asked for some Greek wine, a few raisins and a Sophist. Seleucus wrote back saying that he would send the wine with pleasure but regretted about the Sophist as it was 'not good form among the Greeks to trade in philosophers'. Ambassadors from the West frequently visited the Maurya Kingdom, Megasthenes from Seleucus to Chandragupta, Deimachus from the same monarch to Bindusāra, Chandragupta's son and successor and Dionysius from Ptolemy Philadelphus. The chief of these was Megasthenes who has left us an account of the life and government of the Indian people.

From the cave inscriptions we find that many yonas (Greeks) adopted the Buddhist faith. Among the pious donors mentioned in the Buddhist caves of Karla and Nasik, many Greek names appear. A Ptolemaic gravestone with the Buddhist wheel and trisūla was found by Sir Flinders Petrie.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, when Aśoka (reigned 264-228 B.C.) became a convert to Buddhism, he sent missionaries to the Greek monarchs of Egypt, Syria and Macedonia.<sup>3</sup>

Indian merchants visited Syria and Syrian merchants came to India. India's connection with Egypt was even closer. Eratosthenes, a President of the library of Alexandria, wrote a book on India which is considered to be more reliable than the account by Megasthenes.

Greek history in its Hellenistic phase is a fusion of Greece with the Orient.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The Maurya emperors kept in close touch with their Greek neighbours. Yet it is remarkable how little the Greek speech influenced India. Hellenism, which affected profoundly the whole Western Asia and even Egypt, stopped short at the Hindukush, in spite of the presence of a Greek rāpi at Pataliputra and of the close and friendly relations existing between the Mauryas and their brother monarchs of Syria and Egypt'. Rawlinson: *Intercourse between India and the Western World* (1926) p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1898) p. 875.

<sup>3</sup> *Rock Edict XIII*.

<sup>4</sup> According to Sir Ernest Barker civilisation became Hellenistic-Oriental instead of Hellenic and Western. *The European Inheritance*, Vol. I (1954).



In the Alexandrian period (310–200 B.C.), the centre of intellectual activity shifted from Athens to Alexandria and to it belong the great achievements of Euclid, Archimedes, Eratosthenes, Apollonius. In this period great discoveries were made in anatomy and physiology. The outstanding figure of the next period is Hipparchos (146–127 B.C.), one of the greatest of the world's observers. His precision enabled him to discover the precession of the equinoxes and take the first steps in trigonometry. 'The glory of the third century was its science; nothing of the sort was seen again till modern times'.<sup>1</sup> Theophrastus' classification of plants held the field till Linnæus. Great advances were made in mathematics especially by Archimedes (287–212 B.C.) of Syracuse. Dissection and even vivisection were practised in medicine. Noteworthy were the discoveries in physiology, astronomy and geography.

Zeno, the Stoic, was greatly influenced by Alexander's dream of the unity of mankind. For him the universe is one great city of gods and men ruled by the one Supreme Power called indifferently Zeus, Destiny, Universal Law, God. For the Stoics the Logos was divine. They did not recognise any God beyond the world. Health or sickness, wealth or poverty mattered little. The soul alone counted. The world has no purchase on it. Whatever the world did to us, it was open to us to withdraw into our own soul and find peace. Along with the Buddhists, the Stoics held that none could harm one but oneself. Virtue is its own reward. It is the only happiness. The Stoics gave to Christianity belief in the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity which sprang from the conception of a law of nature.

The Stoics gave an emperor to Rome, Marcus Aurelius. As emperor, he said, his country was Rome but as a man he belonged to the world. He did the duties of his office but his heart lay elsewhere. His symbol was the sphere of Empedocles, 'lighted by the light whereby it sees the truth of all things and the truth within itself'. His *Meditations* indicates that he believed in a policy of equal rights for all.

One hundred and sixty years after Alexander's invasion, Menander (175–150 B.C.) entered the Gangetic valley. He took interest in Indian thought and engaged in dialectical discussions with Buddhist philosophers. *Milindapañha* or the *Questions of King Menander* is an important Buddhist text.

The Brāhmi inscription on the monolithic pillar (150 B.C.) which

<sup>1</sup> Tarn in *The European Inheritance*, Vol. I (1954) p. 192.



is near Besnagar, Gwalior, records the story of a Greek diplomat at the Court of Besnagar, 'This garuḍa column of Vāsudeva, the god of gods, was erected here by Bhāgavata (the worshipper of God, Viṣṇu) by Heliodorus, son of Dion, an inhabitant of Taxila, a Greek ambassador who came from the great King Antialkidas to King Kāśiputra Bhagabhadra, the saviour, reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship'.

#### IV. THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

Indian influence in the second millennium B.C., in the near East and Asia Minor is evident from Boghazkeiu tablets which speak of a treaty, concluded in the fourteenth century B.C. between the beligerent tribes known as the Hittites and the Mittanis, where the Vedic gods, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa were invoked for their blessings. In another inscription, the twin gods, Aśvins, called by their Vedic title Nasatya, were invoked to bless a marriage alliance between two royal families. Telclamarna letters mention a list of kings who bear Indian names. Indian ideas penetrated the upper valley of the Euphrates in those early days. The discovery of Indian relics at Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt, led Sir Flinders Petrie to the belief that there was an Indian colony in Ancient Egypt in 500 B.C.

The Jews must have come to know of the people of India when Cyrus conquered the Babylonian Empire and made Babylon his capital in 538 B.C. Darius, his successor, conquered the Indus valley and made it the twentieth satrapy of his empire. The people from India and the Jews must have met in Babylon.<sup>1</sup> The Indians knew the Jews as Kalamis, the people of the law. Some Greeks even believed that the Jews were descended from the Hindus.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is a story in the *Mahāśodha Jātaka* which reminds us of the judgment of Solomon. The Buddha was in a former birth, minister of the Raja of Banaras and had to adjudicate between two women who both claimed a certain infant. One of the women was a yakṣiṇī or ghoulish who had stolen the child to devour it. The Buddha ordered one woman to seize the child's head and the other the legs and to pull and each should keep what they got. The ghoulish assents but the rightful mother consents to give her share of the infant rather than hurt him. To her the Buddha gives the child.

<sup>2</sup> According to Josephus, who was born at Jerusalem in A.D. 37, in the last year of the principate of Tiberius and the first of that of Gaius called Caligula and died probably at the age of sixty, not long after A.D. 96, Clearchus says that 'Aristotle his master, related what follows of a Jew'. Clearchus then gives Aristotle's words: 'This man was by birth a Jew and came from Celesyria; these Jews are descended from Indian philosophers. They are named by the Indians Kalamī and by the Syrians Judaei'.

'In the Mosaic Age' Professor S. A. Cook writes, 'Varuṇa, the remarkable

Some of the ideas which developed in the Judaism of the last two centuries B.C. were derived from the Zoroastrian belief in evil spirits. 'Jewish monotheism could never allow to any evil power the relative independence which Zoroastrian dualism conceded to Ahriman, but Judaism went a long way during these centuries in making Satan an evil power, who, by God's permission, opposed good in the world during the present age and in seeing human disease and sin as something caused by an army of evil spirits under the one great prince of darkness. By the time of the Christian era the view was general amongst the Jewish people, as the Gospels show. . . . If there were any doubt that the belief in the personal forces of evil at work in the world came to be a part of the Jews' outlook in consequence of their contact with Persians, such doubt should be dissipated by the fact that the name of the evil spirit in Tobit, Asmodeus, is actually the *Æshma Dæva* of the Avesta'.<sup>1</sup>

The Essenes of Palestine and the Therapeutæ of Alexandria were possibly Buddhist communities; at any rate, they were greatly influenced by Buddhist ideas. The Syrian communities which, for five centuries before Christ, formed part, first of the Persian Empire, then of the Græco-Roman world, came under Indian influence. Pliny says that there were Buddhists in Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

The Essenes owed to non-Jews some of their religious beliefs and practices. According to Josephus, the Essenes 'are Jews by birth and seem to have a greater affection for one another than the other sects have. These Essenes reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence and the conquest over our passions to be virtue. These men are despisers of riches, and their communism raises our admiration. Nor is there any one to be found among them who hath more than another; for it is a law among them, that those who come to them must let what they have be common to the whole order, insomuch that among them all there is no appearance of poverty, or excess of

ethical God of ancient India was known to North Syria'. *The Truth of the Bible* (1938) p. 24.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edwyn Bevan in *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. IX (1932) pp. 419-20. 'The Manicheans owed many of their curious tenets to the Indian lore acquired in the Eastern travels by Terebinthus and the Gnostic heresy shows similar traces of Eastern influence. The debt of neo-Platonism to Oriental sources is indisputable and when we observe the extent of the knowledge about Eastern beliefs exhibited, not only by Origen but by orthodox writers like Clement and St. Jerome, we cannot help wondering whether Christianity does not owe some of its developments—monasticism and relic worship for instance—to Buddhist influence'. Rawlinson. *Intercourse between India and the Western World* (1926) p. 138.

riches but every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions, and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren. . . . They have no one certain city, but many of them dwell in every city. . . . The opinion is strongly held among them that bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent but that the souls are immortal and continue for ever. . . . When they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they, then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward'.<sup>1</sup> John the Baptist was a hermit who eschewed ordinary food, put on clothes made of camel's hair. He spent years in meditation on God and prayed for the forgiveness of his sins and those of others.<sup>2</sup>

We find evidence in Josephus that the Jews knew something of the doctrines and practices of the Hindus at the time of Jesus. Before the total destruction of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70, the Jews made a final stand against the Romans at Massada where there was a strong fortress held by the Jews under the leadership of one Eleazor. It was besieged and a moment came when it could not be defended any longer. Eleazor proposed to those who were with him that they should all kill one another rather than fall into the hands of the Romans. He said: 'Let our wives die before they are abused and our children also, and after we have slain them, let us bestow that glorious benefit upon one another, naturally, and preserve ourselves in freedom as an excellent monument for us'. The arguments he used to those who shrank from so dreadful an ordeal remind us of the teaching of the Upaniṣads, Buddhism and the Bhagavadgītā. The clear distinction made between the immortal soul and the mortal body is not to be found in the Old Testament. This development of the Jewish teaching took place between the last book of the Old Testament and the time when this speech was made. It may be due to Plato but Eleazor himself referred it to the teaching of the Hindus. Josephus who took a prominent part in the War of the Jews against the Romans in A.D. 70, gives the part of the address: 'Yet if we do stand in need of foreigners to support us in this path, let us regard those Indians who profess the example of philosophy, for these good men do but unwillingly undergo the time of life, and look upon it as a necessary servitude and make haste to let their souls loose from their bodies; nay, when no misfortune pressed them to it, nor drives them upon it, these have such a desire of a life of

<sup>1</sup> *Josephus* ed. by S. E. Winbolt (1907) pp. 103-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Matthew* III; *John* I. 19-24.

immortality, that they tell other men beforehand that they are about to depart, and nobody hinders them but every one thinks them happy men. . . . Are we not, therefore, ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians?' Eleazar speaks to the Jews a few years after Jesus' death, as if they were quite familiar with the Hindu teaching and example.

Foreign religious influences poured into the Hellenistic world from Syria, Babylonia, Anatolia and Egypt. Babylon's contribution was star-worship and astrology. But the most important were the mystery religions who showed a way out of the sphere of fate. Salvation is attained by personal union with some God who had himself died and risen again. In the Eleusinian mysteries the salvation of the initiate was typified by the death and resurrection of the corn-spirit. The mysteries centering round the Egyptian Isis spread far. She is of the myriad names, embraced in herself every power and virtue and was the special goddess and friend of women and her rule prevailed till Madonna took her place.

The Jews in Alexandria accepted Greek ideas. A hundred years before the birth of Christ, a philosophical treatise influenced by Plato's thought was produced by the Alexandrian Jews and received as a genuine relic of the inspired wisdom of Solomon.<sup>1</sup> Under Greek influence, the problem arose of the relation between the one God as conceived by the Jewish prophets and the Deity as manifested in the rational order of the universe. The reconciliation between the Jewish and the Greek notions of God was effected through the concept of the Wisdom of God immanent in creation, which though distinguishable, is not separate from God Himself. Wisdom in this sense was not different from what the Stoics called Logos, the rational principle immanent in the universe. Hellenistic Judaism

<sup>1</sup> It received the sanction of the Council of Trent. Israel and Egypt were in close touch with each other in the centuries before Christ. Wisdom literature is based on Egyptian models. 'Almost every verse in *Proverbs* XXII. 17-XXIII. 11 finds its fellow in an Egyptian didactic work that came to our knowledge about fifteen years ago (the teaching of Amenope). The first words of *Proverbs* XXII. 17 are: Incline thine ear and hear my words, and apply thine heart to learn (them). For this Amenope has: Give thine ears, hearken to the things I have said, Give thy heart to understand them. . . . The subject matter shared in common comprises advice not to oppress the poor, not to make friends with men given to anger, not to remove ancient landmarks, and not to strive after riches, the reader will see for himself that the comparisons have real substance. Still more remarkable is the fact that both compositions give counsel as to the demeanour at the table of a powerful man, and that both comment upon the way riches have of taking flight like birds'. Alan H. Gardiner in *The Legacy of Egypt* (1947) pp. 67-9.

accepted the equivalence of Wisdom and Logos but maintained that it proceeded from a Transcendent Being. Logos was the Word of God which made the world and revealed Himself to men. Philo of Alexandria rationalised to Greek readers in this way some of the fundamental ideas of Jewish monotheism. The works of Philo (first century B.C.) are distinguished by the combination of Mosaic faith and Greek thought. They were, for the most part, composed in the reign of Augustus, before the death of Jesus and probably before His birth. Philo emphasises the transcendence of God, who is wholly removed from all relations. We know that He is but we cannot define His nature. He is not to be apprehended by thought. The predicates we attribute to Him express the gulf that separates Him from the world of things, relative and finite. If God is not the world, the only way to relate the two is by means of powers that belong to God and are yet separate from Him. For Plato, these are the Ideas and later thought tended to hypostasise them. For the Jews, these are the personified attributes of God. Philo looked upon the principle mediating between the transcendent God and the finite world as the Logos, the first-born son of God or even the second God, the heavenly man. The concept of the Logos, analogous to the Vedic Vāk, the word as divine power, entered the Fourth Gospel.

The Romans were the first pupils of the Greeks and learnt from them though they conquered them. Though the Greeks maintained for centuries the institution of slavery, they had an innate sense of human dignity to transcend the division between the Greeks and the barbarians. They believed in man as such, in his potentialities. This thought of Greece was translated into fact by the Romans who have left for us the majestic monument of the Roman law. In the Græco-Roman civilisation the two streams coalesced. Virgil's *Æneid* clothed Greek imagination in Roman language. The Greek sense of form changed the Roman sense of mission and responsibility. The Roman mind centred on order, tradition, in the sense of a heritage we preserve, not a set of fetters which bind us. Rome insisted on the concept of a political community under law in which every free citizen participates in the making of the law and was equal before it. Roman morality called for the deliberate control of social action and the voluntary subordination of the individual to the requirements of the community. In social living the Græco-Roman civilisation was a great success. It protected personal and spiritual liberties and promoted efficiency and obedience. The Roman Empire extended

over Europe, Northern Africa, Egypt and the Near East. The Roman world was not a European world; it was a Mediterranean one in which Asia Minor and North Africa were integrated.

While Greece encouraged free thought, and Rome cultivated the will to action, Palestine gave to Europe Christianity which harnessed the emotions. Rome conquered Syria and Palestine in the first century B.C. Both Alexandria in Egypt and Antioch in Syria had considerable Jewish populations. Many parables, legends and religious myths and concepts travelled from India to Syria, Egypt and Palestine. Buddhism spread to Asiatic regions in the neighbourhood of Greece. About the middle of the second century B.C., two Indian chiefs who were defeated in an insurrection against their king, fled to Taron in the Upper Euphrates and built a town and a temple to Kṛṣṇa. They flourished for more than four hundred years when St. Gregory in A.D. 304 razed the temple to the ground.

Wherever the Roman Empire held sway, its laws and institutions, the structure and dignity of its magistracy were recognised. Rome became the model of organised power. Its power was imbued with the spirit of law and obedience, with the spirit of religion, the spirit of tolerance and sound administration. The thought of Greece and the religion of Jesus intermingled in the Roman Empire. It was thought that religion could weld together the whole Mediterranean world in a new form of unity and add the cohesive force of a common religious allegiance to the binding ties of a common citizenship in a single empire.

Augustus died in A.D. 14 and Tiberius succeeded him. During the reign of Tiberius occurred the events recorded in the Christian gospels. The Hebrews were a kind of religious confederacy bound together by the worship of one God who was regarded by them as king, lawgiver, judge and leader in war. Moses of Hebrew birth and Egyptian upbringing was the prophet of the great God Yahweh. The later prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel turned the religion of Israel into an ethical monotheism. God is essentially good and requires His worshippers to be good also. Yahweh is the god of righteousness whose primary interests were justice, mercy and truth. The world is a realm of law in which moral values are supreme.

The conquests of Alexander the Great brought Judea along with the whole Near and Middle East into the sphere of Hellenism. The Jews learnt to speak Greek and conformed to the manners and cus-



toms of their neighbours so long as they did not conflict with the practice of their religion. The Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek. Thus Hebrew monotheism was brought nearer to the half philosophical, half mystical ideas of the time. Though originally an Eastern faith it acquired an intellectual apparatus and technique that enabled it to enter into the European heritage. The peaceful penetration of Greek ideas corrected the tendency to a clannish exclusiveness and made for a broader humanity.

*The Acts of the Apostles* provides an illustration of the way in which preachers and philosophers, propagandists and demagogues travelled from one part of the Empire to another. St. Paul lived in Rome two whole years at his own expense, preaching and teaching with all confidence, 'no man forbidding him'.<sup>1</sup> Rome encouraged free movement of thought.

The influence of Persia and India on the Middle East where Christianity developed is obvious.<sup>2</sup> Buddhist ideas travelled to the shores of the Mediterranean through the Greek cities which lay along the route by means of trade and missions. Alexandria lay open even more than Syria to the ideas of the East. A strange mingling of ideas belonging to the different traditions, Greek, Babylonian, Buddhist and Zoroastrian, was taking place in the century before the Christian era. About this period there was long-range trade between Rome and India in amber, ivory, incense, pepper and silk, articles which could not be got from within the frontiers.

When Rome overthrew the Near East politically, the spirit of the East entered Rome. The Græco-Roman cults proved emotionally inadequate to the people whose vision was enlarged by the prophets of Israel and the philosophers of India. The weary and the agitated peoples looked to the East for religions of salvation. From Asia Minor came the worship of Cybele with its hymns and dances, with its ideas of a deity dying to live again. From Syria came the cult of the Dea Syra, from Persia the worship of Mithras with its initiations, sacraments, mysteries and discipline. Mithras in later Zoroastrianism became the saviour Lord. 'Thus spake Ahura Mazdā to the holy Zarathustra. When I created Mithra, lord of wide pastures, then, O Spitama, I created him as worthy of sacrifice, as

<sup>1</sup> *Acts of the Apostles* XXVIII. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. H. M. Gwatkin: *Studies in Asianism* (1882). 'Even the stern monotheism of Israel was corroded by Oriental influences. They are as clear in the philosophic Philo and even in the Orthodox Talmudists as in the contemplative self-annihilation of the Essenes'. p. 12.



worthy of prayer as myself, Ahura Mazdā'.<sup>1</sup> Mithras is the saviour of the needy and the sinful.<sup>2</sup> As the Mithra cult travelled to the West, Mithras became identified with Apollo, Helios and Hezones, as we see from the monument of Antiochus I of Counagene (69-38 B.C.).<sup>3</sup> The cult gained its greatest victories in the Roman Empire. Diocletian Galerius and Licinius dedicated an altar to Mithras in A.D. 307 at Carmuntum. After the victory of Constantine the cult languished and was ultimately banned by the decree of Theodosius (379-95). From Egypt came the worship of Osiris and of Isis, which included the thought of a suffering and all-merciful Mother-Goddess who yearned to ease the woes of mankind. In the presence of these deities, the official gods of Olympus receded into the background. All these cults and beliefs, though foreign to the old official worships of Greece and Rome, were not altogether strange to the Mysteries which had for long been the real religion of the Greek people. Even after Constantine recognised Christianity, Julian was initiated into the ancient mysteries of Eleusis and the worship of Mithras. If Christianity had not triumphed, it would have been Mithras or Serapis or the Great Goddess but not any Olympian deity.

Mithraism and Christianity had striking resemblances. Their followers were 'brothers'. They believed in baptism and prescribed ascetic practices. The deity in both is a mediator between this world and the next. Both taught that the Saviour God would return, awaken the dead, judge the good and the evil and award immortality to the former and annihilation to the latter. Justin imagined that the whole system of Mithraism was the trickery of the devil to mislead the Christians.<sup>4</sup>

Christianity triumphed as it encouraged mysticism, preached an eschatology of hope and had a noble ritual. It appealed to the lowly as it taught that in the eyes of God the slave was equal to the emperor. It ordained brotherly love and fellowship. The intellectual content which it soon acquired from Greek thought appealed to the thinking while the superstitious were attracted by the miraculous element.

Many of the stories about Jesus and parables used by Him had their parallels in India. Judea was conquered by Rome in 63 B.C.

<sup>1</sup> *Mihir Yasht* X.1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* X.84; X.93.

<sup>3</sup> See Professor S. G. F. Brandon's article on *Mithraism and Its Challenge to Christianity*, *Hibbert Journal*, January 1955.

<sup>4</sup> *Apologia* 1.66.

ness. Jesus sets aside all authorities. Whatever they may say, 'I say unto you'. He takes His stand on truth as verified in His experience. Truth, for Him, is not a historical fact but spiritual life. His teaching brushes aside all the legalistic encumbrances of the Jewish religion and holds that in the two old commandments everything required of man was summed up. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God'. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. Jesus' religion affirmed these two central simplicities. St. John says: 'The law was given through Moses and grace and truth came through Jesus'. When Jesus was asked to explain the Kingdom of God, He said, 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here or there! for lo, the Kingdom of God is within'.<sup>1</sup> God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. It is our duty to realise the God in us. There are no impassable barriers between the human and the divine orders.<sup>2</sup> If man were totally corrupt, if he had no links with the world of spirit, the message of religion cannot find its way to the heart of man. The sharp distinction between God and man, which we find in some aspects of Greek thought, gets into Christianity. Human nature, weakened as it was by personal and original sin, is regarded as incapable of creative activity. Man, in one sense, is a product of nature, subject to its vicissitudes, compelled by its necessities, driven by its impulses, but he is also a spark of spirit and so stands outside of nature and the world. There is a point of contact with God, which exists in man, who stands at the junction of nature and spirit. 'No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven'.<sup>3</sup> Jesus was the son of man and the son of God. He was in contact with both the levels of being, earthly and heavenly. He came as a mediator. As a human being He was exposed to every temptation. He was tempted even into the last moment. 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' He suffered agony. Everything was so difficult for Him. Jesus was an example to men for He raised Himself through inner doubts and discords, temptations and battles. Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Baron von Hugel quotes the following passage attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas: 'Great is the blindness and exceeding the folly of many souls that are ever seeking God, continuously sighing after God, and frequently desiring God; whilst all the time, they are themselves the tabernacles of the living God . . . since their soul is the seat of God, in which he continuously reposes'. *De Beatitude*, III. 3. Baron von Hugel: *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 2nd ed. (1923) II, pp. 151-2.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine says: 'Because men have become exiles even from themselves there has been given also a written law. Not because it has not been written in the heart, but because thou wast a deserter from thy heart'.

<sup>3</sup> John III. 13.

advanced in wisdom and stature. 'The child grew and waxed strong in spirit and was filled with wisdom and grace was upon him'.<sup>1</sup> He bridged the gulf between the human and the divine.

The Kingdom of Heaven refers to a state of mind, a higher level of being, the state of enlightenment, bodhi, vidyā. Truth makes for freedom. When Jesus says: 'Repent' He refers to a change of consciousness. The Greek word translated as repentance is *meta-noia*. It is a change of consciousness, an inner evolution, a higher level of understanding. The heart of man can comprehend the higher reality.<sup>2</sup> It is not penitence or regret but a complete change of mind and heart, a revolution in our outlook, the displacement of ignorance, avidyā by knowledge, vidyā. It is a new way of thinking, feeling and acting. It is a rebirth. 'Unless a man is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God', said Jesus to Nicodemus.<sup>3</sup> Rebirth belongs not to the natural man, but the secret, internal, the spiritual man. It is another step in evolution. 'Repent and be turned'.<sup>4</sup> It is a whirling round of our consciousness. 'Except ye turn and become as little children'.<sup>5</sup> There is the child in us that is responsive to the magic and mystery of the world. We are generally lost in the world of objects and the things of sense. The mystery of life is destroyed by life and remains only a memory, dimly felt at moments recalling for a fleeting instant something that we knew once and possessed. We must recover this lost possession,<sup>6</sup> recapture freshness and spontaneity. Man must change himself. The writer to the Ephesians says: 'Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead'.<sup>7</sup> Christian teaching in its origin before it became organised and externalised was awakening from sleep through the light shed by the inner wisdom. Jesus like the Buddha was one who had awakened and taught others the way of awakening. The Kingdom of Heaven is not something in the future. It is at hand. It is within us. When we attain this state, we are freed from law. 'The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath'.<sup>8</sup>

St. John in the Prologue to the Gospel says: 'But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God'.<sup>9</sup> The child or son of God does not mean merely the creature of God but in St. Peter's words: 'partakers of the divine nature'. This comes out in S. John's account of Jesus' prayer at the

<sup>1</sup> Luke II. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *Ecclesiastes*: 'He hath set eternity in the heart of man'. III. 11.

<sup>3</sup> John III. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Acts of the Apostles* III. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew XVIII. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III. 5.1.

<sup>7</sup> V. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Mark II. 27.

<sup>9</sup> I. 12.

last supper: 'That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us. . . . The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one'.<sup>1</sup> Each one of us can become an incarnation of God.<sup>2</sup> In the words of St. John's Prologue, the Logos 'was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man'.

God is not an idea that is conceived but a reality that is experienced. Against the Corinthian Christians who adhered to Judaism, Paul said: 'Must one glorify oneself? Is it useful? Yet I shall refer to some visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ, who, fourteen years ago, was ravished to the third heaven (if it was in his body I do not know, if it was outside of his body, I do not know, God knows). And I know that this man was taken into Paradise, and heard some ineffable words which it is not permitted to a man to reveal'.<sup>3</sup> Religion is the awareness of God, the development of a consciousness, which Jesus had. St. Paul's words, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus',<sup>4</sup> refer to the meaning of religious consciousness, the realisation of the Supreme Presence, union with God. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind'. We must love God with our entire being. The best known sentence of Augustine's Confession is: 'Thou hast made us for thyself and our hearts are restless till they find rest in thee'. This is a comment on the Psalmist: 'Like as the hart desireth the water brook, so longeth my soul after thee, O God'.<sup>5</sup> What Jesus insists on is a change of mind, a trans-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. XVII. 21-2.

<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful whether Jesus makes any claims for Himself as the agent in the redemptive purpose of God. The late Professor R. H. Lightfoot says: 'It seems, then, that the form of the earthly no less than of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us. For all the inestimable value of the Gospels, they yield us little more than a whisper of His voice; we trace in them but the outskirts of His ways'. *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (1935) p. 225. Dean Matthews of St. Paul's observes: 'Even, St. Paul, I think nowhere definitely equates Jesus Christ with God. The Son is always in his writings subordinate to the Father, and we may doubt whether he would have subscribed to the clause in the Athanasian creed "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead"'. *The Problem of Christ in the Twentieth Century* (1950) p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> II Corinthians XII. 1-4. Thomas Aquinas says: 'The Divine essence cannot be seen by a created intellect save through the light of glory, of which it is written (*Psalm XXXV. 10*): "In Thy light we shall see light". But this light can be shared in two ways. First, by way of an abiding form, and thus it beatifies the saints in heaven. Secondly, by way of a transitory passion . . . and in this way that light was in Paul when he was in rapture. Hence this vision did not beatify him simply, so as to overflow into his body, but only in a restricted sense'. *Summa Theol.* II. 175, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Philippians* II. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *XLII. 1.*

figured consciousness. Ordinarily we live outward lives, overpowered by our senses. We live according to what is called 'the mind of the flesh', the mind based on the senses. The part of man which is truly himself is not manifest. The perfecting of man is an inner process.

We have to develop God-consciousness even as Jesus did. In us it is obscured, enfeebled and imperfectly developed. In Jesus it was fully and powerfully manifested. The appearance of the first man, Adam, constitutes for us the life of the once-born; the appearance of the second Adam constitutes the state of the twice-born. The human race has to be born again, in spirit.

The Incarnation in Christ is a supreme example of a universal truth. Jesus is given to us as an example of godly life. He is there to enable us to become not merely Christians but Christs. Jesus in the phrase of Irenæus, 'recapitulates' humanity.

For Jesus, theology was not the central fact of religion. The way and the truth are to end in life. God is to be existentially known and not to be literally described. Doctrines are useful fictions of a sophisticated culture bound by words as substitutes for realities. On earth we see 'through a glass darkly'.<sup>1</sup>

The revelation of God is the Judaic contribution. God by His revelation imparts the knowledge of the good and gives us the power to attain it. Man's goodness is a gift of God's grace. It underlines an attitude of humility, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner'.<sup>2</sup> Jesus makes out that the realisation of man's destiny is not simply a gift but an attainment. We have to work for it with diligence through prayer and fasting, through the contemplative life.<sup>3</sup>

Though Jesus' religion is simple, it is not easy. We must give up

<sup>1</sup> *Corinthians* XIII. 12. In his diary of 1900, Rilke argues that our views of Jesus hide us from God. 'For young people Christ is a great danger, the far-too-near, the concealer-of-God. They grow used to seeking the divine with the measure of the human. They enervate themselves with the human and later freeze in the keen air of the heights of eternity. They stray among Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints; they lose themselves among figures and voices. They are disillusioned by the partially related, which neither amazes them, nor terrifies them, nor tears them from their everyday existence. They resign themselves, and in order to possess God, they must be unresigned'. *Rainer Maria Rilke*: F. W. Van Heeri Khuizen (1951) p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke* XVIII. 13.

<sup>3</sup> St. Clement describes the glory of contemplation: 'This is the apprehensive vision of pure hearts, and it is the work of the accomplished gnostic to have intercourse with God: as much as possible becoming like unto the Lord'. *Stromata* VII, 3. Origen teaches the way to mystical union in similar words: 'God . . . is perfect goodness, and man can become like unto God by learning to know him through the realisation of the presence of the Word in his heart, through purity and *apatheia*'.

all our private preferences and carry out the will of the Supreme. 'My meat is to do the will of him who sent me and finish his work' is the saying attributed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Each one of us has to co-operate with the purpose of God for us.

Though wisdom rises out of disillusion there is no acceptance of the cruelty of life or of acquiescence in evil. When we are called upon to love our neighbour, we are not required to love him as a sinner but as a man for the sake of the God in him. Love of God expresses itself as the love of man. St. Paul wrote: 'Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love'. 'Love is the fulfilment of the law'.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus proclaims a universal morality, that all men are brothers, children of one Father.<sup>3</sup> Jesus gives a new definition of neighbour in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Whoever is in need and whom we are in a position to help is our neighbour. St. Paul quotes from the Hymn to Zeus by Cleanthes: 'In him we live and move and have our being' as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring'.<sup>4</sup> Jesus tells us 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven'.<sup>5</sup> St. Paul said, 'In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but yet are all one man in Christ Jesus'.<sup>6</sup> These distinctions are irrelevant, for life is one and indivisible. We are members one of another. Jesus asks us to assume a responsibility for the whole of humanity. The interpenetration of peoples and cultures is not an Utopian ideal but a practical reality.

When some of those who observed the life of Jesus felt like looking upon Him as a divine manifestation, the Logos doctrine helped them to rationalise their belief. In the letters of Paul, the relation of Jesus to the world and history is conceived as that of the Wisdom of God and its embodiment. In John there is an elaboration of this view. The Divine Logos existed from all eternity in inseparable unity with

<sup>1</sup> IV. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Romans XIII. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew XVIII. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Acts XVII. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew V. 44. See also XXVI. 52.

<sup>6</sup> Colossians III. 11. Ruysbroeck says: 'This is that nobleness which we possess by nature in the essential unity of our spirit, where it is united to God according to nature. This neither makes us holy, nor blessed, for all men, whether good or evil, possess it within themselves, but it is certainly the first cause of all holiness and blessedness'. *Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, II, 57, E.T. by P. Wynschenck Dom in his *John of Ruysbroeck* (1916).



God. It is the means or instrument of his self-revelation. The world is the revelation of the Divine Logos, God's wisdom or thought. It is revealed in the mind of man, specially in the minds of those men who received the Word of God, the prophet souls and others in all countries whose minds are open to truth. The revelation in the mind of man did not find sufficient response and men did not grow into the likeness of God. So Divine Wisdom became revealed in a single historical personality. 'The Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory'. The revelation through the Logos was first in the universe,<sup>1</sup> then in the human race, then in its prophets and last in Jesus.

Whatever we may do, we cannot escape from the love of God. St. Paul says: 'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord'.<sup>2</sup>

The doctrine of hell-fire is inconsistent with Jesus' life and teaching. Jesus asks us to forgive our brethren even if they sin against us 'seventy times seven'.<sup>3</sup> If He expects us to behave in this way, God cannot be different. There must be something undivine in God, if He is responsible for everlasting hell-fire. It is true that we have freedom but to vindicate human freedom, it is not necessary to dehumanise God. If we are asked to practise compassion, we need not deny it to God. 'For he maketh his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good and sendeth his rain upon the just and upon the unjust'.<sup>4</sup> If a dweller in hell can resist God eternally, he may also use his freedom to repent and change.

We cannot obliterate the divine in us however much our nature may be perverted by pride or hatred. If we do not see God everywhere, we see Him nowhere. According to a theological interpretation, the humanity of Christ is representative of all humanity and

<sup>1</sup> 'If I ascend up unto heaven, thou art there;

If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there also'. *Psalms* 139, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Romans* VIII. 38-9. Augustine says: 'Why should I desire that Thou should come to me who would not exist if Thou wert not in me? Consequently, I would not be, O my God, I would not exist at all if Thou were not in me. Or rather, I would not be if I were not in Thee, of whom are all things, from whom are all things, in whom are all things. Whence could I come to Thee, since I am in Thee? Or whence couldst Thou come to me? For where could I go outside heaven and earth for Thee to come there, O Thou my God, who said, "I fill heaven and earth"'. *Epist.* C.C. XXXII.

<sup>3</sup> *Matthew* XVIII. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* V. 45.



not only the historic Jesus but the whole race will have the gifts of the Incarnation. The end of the world is the transubstantiation of the whole creation. When St. Athanasius says: 'God became man that man might become God', he refers to man and all creation.

Jesus counts those who adopt other views but practice goodness, among His friends. 'He that is not against us is for us', was Jesus' answer to those who complained that an outsider should go about doing good after His own fashion. In St. Paul's phrase, the Church must be 'all things to all men'. It should not expect or impose a uniform procedure on all souls.

The greatest of the Christian theologians accepts the view that we cannot have an affirmative exposition of the nature of God. St. Thomas Aquinas says: 'In treating of the divine essence the principal method to be followed is that of remotion. For the divine essence by its immensity surpasses every form to which our intellect reaches; and thus we cannot apprehend it by knowing what it is'.<sup>1</sup> Again, 'We know God by unknowing, by a manner of a uniting with God that exceeds the compass of our minds, when the mind recedes from all things and then leaves even itself and is united with the super-resplendent rays of the Divinity. . . . In this state of the knowledge of God, the mind is enlightened from out of the depths of the divine wisdom which defy our scrutiny, for to understand that God is not only above all that exists but even above all that we can comprehend comes to us from the divine wisdom'.<sup>2</sup>

While theology sets great value on definite and precise beliefs as essential for salvation, the greatest Christian thinkers admit that we see through a glass darkly and cannot be precise. Eckhart says, 'For he who seeks God under settled forms lays hold of the form while missing the God concealed in it. That he who seeks God in no special guise lays hold of Him as He is in himself, and such a one "lives with the Son" and is the life itself'.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus' teaching has an ascetic note which is a characteristic of all true religion. The Cross is the way by which man can rise above his nature. We must forsake all to tread in the footsteps of God. 'If thou wilt be perfect', said Jesus, 'go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven'.<sup>4</sup> This invitation was taken seriously in the Eastern Church in Egypt, where

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, XIV.

<sup>2</sup> *Comment de divinis Nominibus*, VII, 1. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Enchiridion* CX. VII.

<sup>4</sup> *Matthew* XIX. 21.

we hear of hermits. St. Antony (A.D. 270) began his life as a solitary, withdrew into the desert, shut himself up in an empty tomb, where he lived for some twenty years. Through the Latin translation of St. Athanasius' *Life of St. Antony*, monasticism was carried to the West.

The ascetics of the Eastern Roman Empire fashioned a mystic theology which seeks the direct experience of the vision of God and union with the Godhead. Each one of us must become a messenger of the new world, which is yet unborn but groaning and travailing to be born.

The whole life and teaching of Jesus is so distinctive that it cannot be regarded as a natural development of Jewish and Greek ideas. The late C. F. Andrews was so much impressed by the saintliness of the religious characters he met in India that he felt that it was from India that the beauty of Christ had sprung. He wrote to Rabindranath Tagore :

'I am beginning to understand from history that Christianity is not an independent Semitic growth, but an outgrowth of Hindu religious thought and life. . . . Christ appears to me like some strange, rare, beautiful flower whose seed has drifted and found a home in a partly alien land. India, in this as in so many other ways, is the great Mother in the world's history. Christ, the Jewish peasant, lived instinctively, as part of His own nature, this non-Jewish ideal of *ahimsā* which is akin to Hinduism. He had the Universal Compassion, he had the Universal Charity, as marked in the agony of crucifixion as on the sunny Galilean hills.

'The leading consequence of this central position would be that we might see in the world's higher religions a branching family tree. . . . It will mean a lonely pilgrimage for me, for it means giving up claims for the Christian position which every one in the West whom I know and love could not conceive of doing'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Tagore written on R.M.S. *Briton* early in March 1914, quoted in C. F. Andrews by Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes (1949) p. 102.

Cp. Will Durant: 'India was the motherland of our race and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages; she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics, mother through the Buddha of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother through the village community of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all'.

## LECTURE II CONTINUED

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### WEST II

#### I. DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CHRISTIANITY

The conversion of the West to Christianity between the first and the seventh centuries gave a decisive turn to the development of the West. The classical culture and the Christian religion both took firm root in Western Europe. A deeply spiritual and universalist faith became adapted by means of complex ecclesiastical organisations to the needs, beliefs and practices of the Graeco-Roman world. The doctrine was given a logical form and a dogmatic setting. Rome with her practical bent and love of organisation helped to institutionalise the religion. While the heart of Christianity is Eastern, its brain theology, its body the ecclesiastical organisation became Graeco-Roman.<sup>1</sup> There has been continuous tension between the simple Eastern faith with its mystical spirituality and reason and human thought. Clement of Alexandria suggests that the Apostle's saying to the Corinthians: 'I hope that your faith may grow so that I may be able to tell you the things that are beyond you' refers to mystical wisdom or esoteric Christianity. 'By this he teaches us that gnosis, which is the perfection of faith, extends beyond ordinary instruction'. 'Gnosis having been left by the apostles to a small number of the faithful without writings it has come down to us'. Origen observes: 'The individual ought to portray the ideas of holy scrip-

<sup>1</sup> Professor Werner Jaeger observes: 'It was the Greeks who brought the Christian faith into the form of dogma and the very history of Christian dogma was enacted on the soil of Greek culture. . . . Sects, dogma and theology, indeed, are definitely products of the Greek mind and their intellectual structure is such that nothing else could have given them their characteristic stamp. It is not, however, from the Greek religion that they arise, but from philosophy, which at the time of its impact on Christianity was split up among a number of sects, each distinguished by its own rigid dogmatical system. Even if we cannot characterise the intellectual attitude of the early Greek thinkers as dogma in the rigid sense of the Stoics or the Epicureans of the Hellenistic age, theirs is the root from which both concept and word have grown'. *The Theology of Early Greek Philosophers* (1947) p. 62.

ture in a threefold manner upon his own soul; in order that the simple man may be edified by the "flesh" as it were, of the Scripture, for so we name the obvious sense; while he who has ascended a certain way (may be edified) by the "soul" as it were. The perfect man, again, and he who resembles those spoken of by the apostle, when he says, "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, but not the wisdom of the world, nor of the rulers of this world who come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God hath ordained before the ages, unto our glory", (may receive edification) from the spiritual law, which has a shadow of good things to come. For as man consists of body, and soul, and spirit, so in the same way does Scripture'.<sup>1</sup> St. Irenaeus refers like Clement, Origen and others, to an oral and secret tradition emanating from Jesus and transmitted by the apostles. St. Denis speaks of 'two theologies one common and the other mystical' with 'public' and 'secret' traditions respectively.<sup>2</sup>

During the second century a series of writers called the Apologists attempted to commend the new faith as a way of life and thought consistent with all that was best in Greek philosophy. Justin Martyr declares: 'All who have lived according to the Logos are Christians, even if they are generally accounted as atheists, like Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks'.<sup>3</sup> The word which was made flesh in order to save the world was also the Word which taught the world in former ages. The Word spoke to the Jews in the Law and to the Greeks in philosophy. Justin welcomes as fellow-Christians all who strive wholeheartedly for the truth, for Christ is the truth.

Several attempts were made to assimilate Christianity to Hellenism which were called Gnostic (from the Greek *gnosis*, knowledge). The Church anxious to consolidate its own institutions combated gnosticism and tried to develop a theology which was distinctively

<sup>1</sup> *De Principiis* IV. 1. See *Hebrews* X. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Frithjof Schuon: *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*, E.T. (1954) pp. 93-4.

<sup>3</sup> I. *Apology* 46. Cp. Augustine: 'What is now called the Christian religion always existed in antiquity and was never absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ appeared in the flesh. At this time the true religion, which was already there, began to be called Christian'. *Retractations* I. XIII. 2. The freest spirit of the Middle Ages, Nicholas of Cusa declared, 'God is sought in various ways and called by various names in the various religions that he has sent various prophets and teachers in various ages to the various peoples' *De Pace Seu Concordantia Fidei* V. (1453) quoted in the *Hibbert Journal*, January 1954, p. 109.

Empire. The burden of administering a vast area threatened by decay within and assaults from without was too great for a single centre. Constantine made Constantinople the capital of the East, and by the end of the fifth century an East Roman or Byzantine Empire divided itself from the West, and for the next ten centuries established itself as a second Rome. The separation of the two, Western and Eastern forms, marks a geographical division between the peninsular parts of Europe with its coasts and indentations and the great European land mass on which it infringes. Christianity itself assumed two forms, the Catholic form of the West and the Orthodox form of the East. Though both Rome and Byzantium were partakers of the same culture, they became estranged in the Middle Ages owing to the military occupation of Byzantium by the armies of feudal Europe.

In the period of A.D. 200-1000 leadership passed to the East and oriental influences affected Western culture. This is true of the Byzantine Empire which remained by far the greatest European power, representing the higher aspects of Western culture. Oriental influences have been so strong in Byzantium that it was looked upon as an Oriental empire which had adopted the Greek language and assumed the Roman name while remaining essentially alien to the living spirit of the Western culture.<sup>1</sup> Among the despised native people of Egypt arose Christian monasticism which had little affinity with the Hellenic or the Western tradition. In the East, the people went on thinking and talking, arguing and inventing. Even after the destruction of the Western empire, there were a few wise people who withdrew into quiet lonely places to teach, copy and preserve. In a monastery here or a solitary cell there were collected patient students eager to understand the seminal thoughts of the past and transmit them to others. The barbarians learnt from the priests in

<sup>1</sup> There are some today who emphasise the non-oriental character of the Byzantine culture. Professor Norman Baynes, for example, holds that there are no grounds for the view that the Byzantine empire underwent a process of progressive orientalising. He holds that 'the elements which in their combination formed the complex civilisation of the Empire were indeed the Roman tradition in law and government, the Hellenistic tradition in language, literature and philosophy, and a Christian tradition which had already been refashioned on a Greek model'. *Byzantium: An Introduction to the East Roman Tradition* edited by N. H. Baynes and H. S. B. Moss (1948) p. xx. Both the views are partially correct. The old tradition of the classical city state, with its ideals of freedom of citizenship and autonomy gave place to a sacred monarchy and the life of the people found its centre in the Church and the liturgy. The orthodox faith had become the real bond of social unity and the monastic life which was the antithesis of the political life of the Greek city was the typical organ of the Byzantine culture.

retreats who gradually reconstructed the shattered world of the intellect.

## II. ISLAM

Orthodox jewry felt that while Christianity professed loyalty to the Jewish legacy of monotheism, it practically capitulated to Hellenic paganism and polytheism. It disregarded the great Jewish commandment 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them'.<sup>1</sup> Christianity in its doctrine of the Trinity, in its cult of the Saints, in the usual representations of the three persons of the Trinity and the saints does violence to the clear injunctions of the Old Testament. Many orthodox Christian thinkers were disturbed by this inconsistency and became iconoclastic. The Council of Elvira (A.D. 300) in its thirty-sixth canon forbade the exhibition of pictures in churches. Eusebius (A.D. 264-340) refused the request for a holy image of Constantia, the sister of Constantine the Great. Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia and Metropolitan of Cyprus (A.D. 315-402), tore up a curtain with a picture embroidered on it which he found hanging in a church. For many centuries we have evidence of icono-phobia, and many were prepared for a new faith which would uphold the clear injunctions of the Jewish faith on this matter.

Besides, Christians in the West became involved in dogmatic disputes and were in Gibbon's words 'more solicitous to explore the nature than to practise the laws of their founder'.<sup>2</sup> Attention shifted from Christianity to Churchmanship. While some Christians were inclined to withdraw from the world and not convert it, others wished to establish a moral order in this world. Those who were interested in the practice of religion rather than its theory were groping for a new religion.

Islam which arose in the seventh century was marked by a radical

<sup>1</sup> Exodus XX. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Ch. XLVII. Ammianus Marcellinus of Antioch writes: '(The Emperor Constantius II) found the Christian religion uninvolved and straightforward and proceeded to muddle it up with old wives' superstitions. As his delight in complicated theological hairsplitting was greater than his sense of responsibility for maintaining harmony, he provoked innumerable dissensions, and he added fuel to the galloping flames by organising acrimonious debates'. *Res Gestae*, Book XXI, Ch. XVI, Sec. 18 cited in Arnold J. Toynbee: *A Study of History*, Vol. VII (1954) p. 96.



monotheism and insistence on human brotherhood. God (Allāh) has revealed Himself to man through the prophets of whom the latest and the greatest is Muhammad. The Holy Book or the Qurān is a collection of His sayings and sermons. It states the will of God to whom prayers are offered according to fixed rules on each day. Islam shared with Christianity the vision of an Ultimate Personal Reality and with Judaism an uncompromising insistence on God's otherness from man. Islam denied the divinity of Jesus. Though Muhammad wanted to be an ordinary son of man, later biographers represent him as 'the incarnation of Divine light'.<sup>1</sup>

When Islam felt the need for God's fellowship it found an equivalent for Jesus' crucifixion in the martyrdom of Ali, Hasan, Husayn, and these human heroes were transformed by the Shīahs into incarnations of the Godhead. Submission to the will of God is the supreme duty, and those who have submitted to His will are the Muslims, who are bound to make it known to and impose it upon others. This offers the justification for a holy war or Jihad. If Muhammad is guilty of what the modern world treats as errors or crimes, these acts are the expression of the social environment in which he lived rather than acts for which he is personally responsible. He was a child of his society though in many respects he was superior to it. He did not compromise with the polytheism and idolatry which were rampant not only in Arab paganism but in Hellenic Christianity of his time.

The hairsplitting futilities of theologians, the sectarian disputes about precedence among the persons in the Trinity vexed many people who welcomed the seventh century Arab conquerors with relief. A Nestorian chronicler wrote: 'The hearts of the Christians rejoiced at the domination of the Arabs—may God strengthen and prosper it'. In a relatively short time, Islam conquered extensive territories including some of the Mediterranean provinces of the Byzantine empire. Islam became the first triumphant Christian heresy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hurgonje points out, 'the intercession of saints has become indispensable to the community of Muhammad, who, according to Tradition, cursed the Jews and Christians because they worshipped the shrines of their prophets. Almost every Muslim village has its patron saint; every country has its national saints; every province of human life has its own human rulers, who are intermediate between the Creator and the common mortals'. *Muhammadanism* (1916) p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> John of Damascus regarded Islam as a sort of schism, of much the same character as previous heresies. See Henri Pirenne: *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1954) p. 148. (G. Allen & Unwin.)



The foundation of the Azhar mosque by the Fatimid conqueror Jawhar in A.D. 972 was an event of profound import for the world. To it students from all parts of the world still come for instruction in religion and law. In the centres of theological learning, greater knowledge of the thought of Aristotle was acquired which seemed to be incompatible with Christian dogma.

Avicenna, the Latinised form of Abu Ali Hussein Ibn Sina, born in A.D. 980 near Bokhara, has had wide influence in both the Orient and the Occident. Gilson and Gaichon trace his profound influence on the Scholastics particularly Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. Roger Bacon pays generous tribute to him. His thought was Aristotelian in form, Platonic in substance, and neo-Platonic in purpose. Neo-Platonism in his view combined the views of Plato and Aristotle as well as Oriental ideas. Avicenna's own synthesis combined various conflicting elements and brought them into a semblance of harmony with the fundamentals of Islam.

Averroes (1126-1198), the most illustrious of the Muslim thinkers of the twelfth century, physician to the Caliph at Cordova who wrote massive commentaries on Aristotle, derived from Aristotle the doctrine of the uniqueness of the human soul. For Averroes, the fruition of all man's strivings is 'already and always attained'. The actualisation which is incomprehensible to our reason is achieved, 'now and ever' beyond the limiting conditions of time to which we are subjected and from which our customary mode of thinking is derived. The full fruition of the universe, being already and always actualised, cannot certainly belong to the time order as we know it. As the direction of our thinking follows the time order it is difficult to understand this different point of view. But according to Averroes, we can attain happiness only if we discover and understand this other direction. It means that we must think differently about time.

### III. THE CRUSADES

When Islam spread in the West, and the Turks arrived in Asia Minor and the eastern capital of Christendom was threatened, the Holy See encouraged a counter-offensive which was used to re-establish the unity of the Church itself which the Byzantine schism had broken in 1054. The growing menace to the Christian world represented by the Turks and the stories of their acts of fanatical violence in the Holy Land stimulated the movement towards inter-

vention. For the Christians, Jerusalem was the holy city where Jesus taught, was crucified and buried. They felt that they had an inalienable right to the promised land consecrated by the blood of their Saviour. It was their duty, they thought, to rescue their inheritance from the Muslim oppressors who profaned the Lord's sepulchre and despised His disciples. The Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church combined in an effort to drive the Turks away. So towards the end of the eleventh century, the religious wars known as the Crusades<sup>1</sup> started. The first Crusade lasted from 1097 to 1099. Though, as a result of it Jerusalem was conquered from the Seljuk Turks, the Christians were not able to maintain their hold on it. When in 1144, the Turks recaptured Edessa, the princes of Europe were summoned to a new Crusade in 1146. Under the leadership of the French King Conrad the Third and Louis the Seventh a second crusade was undertaken to bolster up the falling fortunes of the Latins. This Crusade was inspired by St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). The expedition came to an end after a series of disasters in 1148.

When under the nominal authority of the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, Saladin himself ruled over a Turkish empire which stretched from Cyrenaica to the south and west of Iraq, and he started his attacks on the Latin territories of the Near East and captured Jerusalem in 1187, a new Crusade, the third was started, in which the emperor Frederick Barbarossa and the Kings of England and France joined. Barbarossa never reached the Holy Land, but Philip Augustus and Richard Coeur de Lion captured Acre on the coast of Palestine in 1191. But Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Muslims. Saladin established Muslim predominance in the Syrian and Egyptian coasts.

Pope Innocent III came to the chair in 1198 and decided to promote a Crusade in order to wrest the Holy Land from the Infidels. His crusade ended in a failure; only the Venetians became masters of the empire's trade.

In 1228-9, Frederick II, who was crowned emperor in 1220, led a Crusade to the Holy Land and effected a return of the Holy City with various territories and advantages and assumed the title of King of Jerusalem. The Holy City was lost again in 1224. King

<sup>1</sup> The name is derived from the Latin *Crux*, meaning Cross. While the symbol of Christianity is the Cross, that of Islam is the Crescent.

Louis IX of France recaptured the Christian spirit of the earlier Crusades, led a new Crusade to the Holy Land (1248-54) but failed in his attempt. In 1270, the English Prince Edward took part in a new Crusade, and after this attempt the Crusading movement rapidly declined.

Gibbon calls the long centuries of the strife of Christendom and Islam the world's debate. The crusading movement was intended to defend Christendom against Islam and another Asiatic invasion which for 400 years so threatened European peoples as to make them realise their community based on religious grounds and gave to the Papacy an opportunity for exercising supranational leadership. But they caused tremendous waste and dreadful bloodshed. In the name of the Cross, the Crusades destroyed Europe's Eastern bulwark and left behind them a legacy of hatred and bitterness.

Though the Crusades were launched to save Eastern Christendom from Muslim rule they ended with the establishment of Muslim rule over the whole of Eastern Christendom. 'Seen in the perspective of history the whole Crusading movement was a vast fiasco'.<sup>1</sup> Islam in its early days was not intolerant. It admitted that the Jews and the Christians received a partial revelation. 'The savage intolerance shown by the Crusaders was answered by growing intolerance amongst the Muslims'.<sup>2</sup>

The Byzantines torn between the threats of Islam and the encroachments of their Latin and Frankish allies reverted to their Greek heritage and claimed cultural autonomy. The extreme monotheism of Islam seemed to them a heresy less pernicious than the polytheistic teachings of the Latin Church which catered to the tastes of the semi-barbarous people who came under Rome's power.<sup>3</sup>

Islam also was affected by sectarian feuds. The Shia sect of Islam exalts the redemptive work and voluntary sacrifice of Husayn for the sins of the Muslim world. Standing by the grave of Muhammad, before departing on the fatal journey to Kerbala, Husayn says:

<sup>1</sup> Steven Runciman: *A History of The Crusades*, Vol. III (1954) p. 468.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 474.

<sup>3</sup> Shortly before the fall of Constantinople on May 29, 1453, a leading Byzantine declared that 'he would rather the Greek Orthodox Church were subject to the Prophet's turban than to the tiara; for in the event, the Turks proved tolerant of Greek Christianity'; whereas the attitude of the West is neatly expressed in the words of Petrarch: 'Doubtless the Turks are enemies but the Greek schismatics are worse than enemies'. *Time and Tide*, July 25, 1953. Article on *Sad Quincentenary* by Patrick Leigh Fermor, p. 985.

'How can I forget thy people since I am going to offer myself voluntarily for their sakes?' The feud within the bosom of Islam between the dominant majority which eulogised its own version of the faith by calling it the beaten track *sunnah* and its usually downtrodden opponents whose version was called the sect, shia came to display all the rancour of violence and cruelty. We are more tolerant towards heretics than towards schismatics.

#### IV. SCHOLASTICISM

The Arab civilisation reached its summit in Spain in the tenth century and its university of Cordova became a great centre of Muslim learning. The Christians of Europe learned much from the arts and sciences of the Arab people, their mathematics and astronomy, their medicine and chemistry, their zoology and accountancy. Attempts were made to reconcile the Aristotelian tradition with the Christian doctrine. Early Scholasticism was essentially French and its chief figures were St. Anselm (1033-1109), Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux. Attention of the thoughtful ceased to be confined within the narrow limits of dialectic, though dialectic continued to be employed in the service of theology and interpretation of dogma. Abelard (twelfth century) accepted the supremacy of authority over reason in the religious sphere. St. Bernard had a horror of free thinking and so opposed the views of Abelard which, he thought, were a menace to religion. He persuaded the Council of Siena to condemn many of Abelard's theses as tainted with heresy.

The next stage of Scholasticism in thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was represented by Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon (1214-1294), Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and Duns Scotus. When Albertus Magnus (1206-1280) and Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274) found that the best minds in the thirteenth century were attracted to Greek thought and Islamic centres, where Aristotle was an object of special study, they strove to win them for Christianity and so incorporated Aristotle in the medieval synthesis. In their time they were modernist in their outlook and breathed new life into Christian doctrine. Unfortunately the new impulses again got frozen. The official philosophy of the Catholic Church was formulated in this period. This stage was succeeded by William of Occam (1300-1349) and the German mystics, Eckhart (1260-1327), Tauler and Suso (1300-1366).

Medieval philosophy developed in a period of scientific inactivity.

Though we had some fruitful scientific discoveries and applications of physics and chemistry to technology in the Middle Ages, such as the mariner's compass and the explosives, in the general scheme of thought science was subordinated to theology. The outlook of the later centuries of the Middle Ages was essentially religious in character. It was a period when Christendom was at unity with itself, artistically creative and fertile of institutions, social, political and cultural, destined to endure through the ages.<sup>1</sup> European mind lived for centuries in the past and felt that all wisdom possible to it was contained in the past. The basis of the medieval intellectual achievement was the reconquest of human thought.

#### V. THE RENAISSANCE

The term Renaissance is used with reference to the twelfth century Europe with its intense intellectual activity, keen appetite for knowledge and a marked desire for direct acquaintance with the thought of Greece and the Roman world. The Western mind was brought into close contact with the results of Greek science and thought through Arab and Byzantine sources. The territorial expansion of the West on the Mediterranean frontier, in Spain and Sicily, at Constantinople and Palestine resulted in a profound modification of the West by the intellectual and artistic influences which she encountered. All this gave Europe the sense of a new world and new values. Europe recovered the Greek spirit of intellectual adventure and exploration. Though the outlook was essentially religious, its culture flowered in colleges and cathedrals, in great books, and great minds. The movement was to a large extent promoted by the Church itself. When the medieval theologians allowed scope for the employment of reason in the study of nature by their distinction of natural and revealed religion they gave an impetus to scientific development. Humanism, the rise of natural sciences, the discovery of the new world and the Reformation were some of the chief results of the Renaissance.

The Universities were created in the thirteenth century. Bologna represented a new stage in the development of the law schools which were already flourishing in the twelfth century. Paris grew out of the liberal arts and theology. The Universities were anxious to protect their autonomy against episcopal control.

<sup>1</sup> See R. W. Southern: *The Making of the Middle Ages* (1953) p. 31.

The revival of learning began in Italy and rapidly spread to other parts of Western Europe. Thomas Aquinas was a professor of the University of Naples and wrote a book on Aristotle. Dante (1265-1361), though he was not a Churchman, dealt with religious problems in his great poem *The Divine Comedy*. It is a Comedy because it has a happy ending. The path to freedom lies through the underworld of sin and expiation.

Greek humanism encouraged the eleventh century attempt to shape the world in accordance with what it believed to be God's design. The idea that the Kingdom of God was not of this earth was set aside and the determination to transform the world affirmed for centuries prepared men's minds for the later Enlightenment. This had the effect of weakening spirituality as religion became confused with social reform. On the other hand, Orthodox Christianity of Eastern Europe emphasised otherworldliness and spirituality, but its social morality was far weaker than that exerted by the Latin Christendom in the West.

Petrarch (1304-1374) and his disciples were the representatives of the humanist attitude to life which aimed at the development of man's powers and the realisation of the ideal man with physical, intellectual and spiritual fullness. While the humanists were not opposed to the Christian religion, they attacked the rigidity and fanaticism of the Christian creed. They asserted the rights of the individual, the free and fearless use of reason and cared more for the certainties of reason than for the comforts of religion. Erasmus, though brought up as a Churchman, was dissatisfied with the life that the Church offered him.

Dante and Petrarch lived when Italy was emancipated from the Imperial and papal control. Aristo and Tasso (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) arose when Italy fell under Spanish power. Niccolo Machiavelli wrote his *Prince* (1513), a handbook of the arts of political success. Though there is no place for justice or mercy in these arts, he calls up the vision of an Italy united and free from foreign rule. The revival of the study of Greek literature led to a renewal of interest in Greek art. The first of the great painters was Giotto, who was born in a village near Florence in 1276. He was followed by a number of great artists, Botticelli (1444-1510), Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Michelangelo (1475-1564), Titian (1477-1576) and Raphael (1483-1520). The later Middle Ages were famous in the history of architecture also.



Scientific inventions like the art of printing, which replaced the laborious practice of writing books by hand, helped the revival of learning. The spread of learning through printed books led to the growth of a new critical spirit which was largely responsible for the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

#### VI. THE REFORMATION

The Holy See's policy of making increasing financial demands on the Christian community either by the taxation of the Churches or by reserving the right to make ecclesiastical appointments and to levy duties on the occasion of each appointment provoked widespread discontent. There were many signs of religious uneasiness and dissatisfaction with the teaching, methods and policies of the Church. Doctrines condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities began to spread. During the seventh decade of the fourteenth century, John Wyclif attacked papal power, episcopal hierarchy, transubstantiation, confession and indulgences. He translated the Bible into English with the help of Nicholas of Hereford and John Purvey. After Wyclif's death in 1384, his disciples, the Lollards, were persecuted but his ideas, however, survived and formed the basis of the English Reformation in the sixteenth century.

John Huss, a Czech theologian, was greatly influenced by Wyclif. He attacked papal taxation, the Church's love of wealth, its hierarchy and its indulgences. Though he did not dispute the doctrine of transubstantiation, he called for greater spiritual depth in religious practice. His teaching was popular, but he was summoned before the Council of Constance, condemned and burnt in 1415.

After the invention of printing, the Bible was printed and found thousands of readers who drew varied conclusions from its vast contents. Scholars with their zeal for truth and fundamental common sense read the Bible in a critical spirit. Luther became the leader of a movement which proclaimed that a man can be justified to God by faith but not by works, that all believers are priests, that priests should be allowed to marry, that private masses should be done away with, that the Pope is anti-Christ. Luther looked upon the whole Latin heritage as anathema. It spelled worldliness and corruption. For Luther works were of no account. They are not the measure of salvation, though they may be its consequence. Salvation consists in a simple abandonment of the soul to God. While he was condemned as a heretic he burnt the papal bulls. The



Lutheran movement made for the intensification of national feeling. National Churches were established in Sweden, Denmark and other parts of Europe. They regarded themselves as members of their national groups and not of the Universal Church.<sup>1</sup>

John Calvin organised the Church in the little City state of Geneva as a model of what the Church in his view should be. In his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* published in 1539 he defined Protestant doctrine and worked out a plan for Church government. While Calvin held that the Middle Ages were a period of darkness and the doctrines defended by Pope Leo I, Gregory the Great and St. Bernard were corruptions of the true faith, he introduced a new kind of authoritarianism which maintained that the doctrine contained in the Scriptures was fixed and final. Purity of doctrine should not be interfered with by scientific curiosity or new knowledge. The idea of predestination, that each man was predestined to salvation or eternal punishment was accepted by his followers.

Among Calvin's contemporaries at the University of Paris was a disabled Spanish officer, Ignatius Loyola, who passed through the experience of a religious conversion and brought to the aid of the Church the zeal and discipline of the Spanish army. His book, *Spiritual Exercises* is a manual intended not to convince men's intellects but subdue their natures to obedience and endurance. He founded the Society of Jesus in A.D. 1540. From then on to the present day, Christendom is divided among Churches and sects. They defined their doctrines and fought in defence of them.

The secular, humanistic concerns of the Renaissance were soon overshadowed by the interests and passions of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. These new trends whether revolutionary or conservative were also religious. The Reformation led to the loss of universal loyalty and the spirit of nationalism which has infected the whole world.

<sup>1</sup> 'Europe's infatuation for the Greeks and Romans dates from the sixteenth century when she began her great political and military reorganisation. She admired them in all things—even those arts in which the Middle Ages had excelled them—because they taught her how to organise armies, how to wage wars, and how to build up great states'. G. Ferrero: *Peace and War*, E.T. (1933) p. 194. Miss Barbara Ward writes in *Faith and Freedom* (1954): 'If one were to seek to sum up in a single sentence the great change that came over Europe in the 16th century, one might say that a vast growth in the vitalities of European society—in nationalism, in economic power, and in overseas trade and discovery—coincided with a great weakening and falling away in the ecclesiastical instruments whose task it had been to mould the raw forces of social life into the semblance of an ordered culture'.

## VII. MODERN SCIENCE

Though scientific principles and method were understood in ancient and medieval times in India and China,<sup>1</sup> their development was arrested and came to fruition in modern West with Galileo, Harvey, Vesalius, Gesner, Newton and others. For the first fourteen centuries of the Christian era we cannot say that Europe was much ahead of China and India.

The traditions of modern science were not discrepant with the general spirit of ancient and medieval Europe. Though Greek science was not backed by experiment, it was still science. Aristotle, for example, insisted on patient induction based on careful observation. Lucretius propounded a view of the universe which was an anticipation of some modern thinkers like Gassendi. Even the alchemy and astrology of the Middle Ages were attempts to discover the nature of things. While the modern mind claimed emancipation from the formal and schismatic character of the Aristotelianism of the Medieval schools, even the schools recovered the true spirit of science as Aristotle conceived it. Scholasticism submitted the whole of reality to the scrutiny of reason. It encouraged critical habits of thought and disinterested study which became the basis of all scientific advance. The Protestant Reformation encouraged the scientific temper in the study of nature as well as the attainment of religious ends. When it asks us to reject the guidance of authority in the pursuit of spiritual truth, and requires us to interpret the Scriptures in the light of one's own experience, it helps us to search for scientific truth not in ancient philosophies but in actual experience.<sup>2</sup> Even though the followers of Calvin believed that certain elect persons were predestined to salvation, soon it was said that the performance of good works indicated that a man was saved. Among those good works was the scientific study of nature. The rise of modern science changed the whole outlook. Europe underwent

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Sprat in his *The History of the Royal Society* (1667), speaking of the aims of the Royal Society and the Christian Church, writes: 'They both may lay claim to the word Reformation; the one having compassed it in Religion, the other purposing it in Philosophy. They both have taken a like course to bring this about; each of them passing by the corrupt copies, and referring themselves to the perfect Originals for their instruction; the one to the Scripture, the other to the huge volume of creatures. They are both accused unjustly by their enemies of the same crimes, of having forsaken the Ancient Traditions, and ventured on Novelties. They both suppose alike that their Ancestors might err, and yet retain a sufficient reverence for them. They both follow the great Precept of the Apostle, of trying all things. Such is the harmony between their interests and tempers'.

greater changes in the period between the middle of the fifteenth and the end of the seventeenth century than in the millenium between Augustine and Machiavelli.

Observational astronomy revived in the fifteenth century owing to interest in the problems of navigation. When Copernicus (1473-1543) began his work, a considerable body of accurate observations was available, prepared among others by Johannes Muller (1436-1476). Copernicus placed the sun in the centre of the universe, ascribed three motions to the earth, a daily spin on its axis, an annual orbit round the sun and a gyration of the earth's axis of spin to account for the procession of the equinoxes. Tycho Brahe and Kepler followed Copernicus. The sun, for Kepler, was the one heavenly body 'which alone we should judge to be worthy of the most high God, if He should be pleased with a material domicile, and choose a place in which to dwell with the blessed angels'. Galileo and Newton continued the work of Copernicus. In 1543 Vesalius published the first modern standard work on anatomy. Galileo (1564-1642), besides promoting the Copernican revolution in astronomy, applied the mathematical-experimental method to the study of mechanics. He made the first thermometer to measure temperature, used the pendulum to measure time and left a design for the first complete pendulum clock. Unfortunately, he had to face the Inquisition, and was condemned for his heresy in supporting the Copernican hypothesis.

Newton became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1671. His contributions to the theory of gravitation are well known. He believed that time, space and motion were absolute quantities. Being a Unitarian, he adopted a view of mechanical pantheism.<sup>1</sup> Newton's *Principia* provided for more than two centuries a framework for the mechanical interpretation of the universe and a basis for the building of physical science. Lagrange said of Newton, 'There is but one universe and it can happen to but one man in the world's history to be the interpreter of its laws'.

During the eighteenth century, English science was mainly experimental, while French science was theoretical. Lagrange (1736-1813) and Laplace (1749-1827) developed the theory of mechanics

<sup>1</sup> 'The Deity endures for ever and is everywhere present, and by existing always and everywhere, He constitutes duration and space . . . who, being, in all places, is more able by His will to move the bodies within His boundless uniform sensorium, and thereby to form and reform the parts of the universe, than we are by our will to move the parts of our body'.

and astronomy, Lavoisier (1743-1794) worked out the theory of the chemical revolution, using the experimental results of English scientists like Joseph Priestley (1733-1804). With Humphry Davy (1778-1829) and Michael Faraday, interest shifted to chemistry and electricity.

The nineteenth century may be treated as the first century of the scientific age, and its thinkers accepted the unity of the natural order and treated man as a part of that order, subject to its laws and limitations. Geology became a separate science in the eighteenth century. Charles Lyell (1797-1875) wrote important books on geology, *Principles of Geology: being an Attempt to explain the Former Changes of the Earth Surface by Reference to Causes now in Operation* (1830-1833) and *The Antiquity of Man* (1863). Charles Darwin's early work was in geology and he says in his *Autobiography* that the study of geology led him to the theory of the evolution of the species, though the idea of the mechanism of that evolution was derived from Malthus' *Essay on Population*. In the closing paragraph of *The Descent of Man*, Darwin wrote: 'Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having risen, instead of being placed there aboriginally, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future'. Meanwhile, another English naturalist, Wallace (1823-1913), developed the theory of natural selection. Progress was accepted as axiomatic, mediated, by the 'survival of the fittest'. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) supported the policies of free trade and economic competition as social forms of natural selection. Darwin's work related man biologically to the anthropoid apes and disturbed religious people. Disraeli declared in 1864: 'What is the question now placed before society with the glib assurance which to me is most astonishing? That question is this: Is man an ape or an angel? I, my Lord, am on the side of the angels. I repudiate with indignation and abhorrence those new fangled theories'.

In spite of popular protests, the concept of evolution was applied to the study of biology and anthropology. George Mendel's researches into the mechanics of heredity (1865), Francis Galton's emphasis on the role of inheritance in the mental development of human beings (1867), Wilhelm Wundt's stress on the inter-dependence of mind and body in his *Principles of Physiological Psychology* (1872), Walter Bagehot's application of the concept of

evolution and the principle of natural selection to social customs and institutions (1873) gave currency to the new theory of man's origin and development. Forceful writers like Thomas Henry Huxley in England and Ernst Haeckel in Germany popularised these views. The great advances in medicine and surgery made by Joseph Lister (1865), Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch gave prestige to the scientific outlook and encouraged the positivist approach.

Albert Einstein, who just passed away, changed our thinking about the world. He looked upon the universe as closed and not infinite. He held that matter and energy were different manifestations of the same thing. His theory of relativity helped nuclear fission.

#### VIII. MODERN TECHNOLOGY

The Royal Society was intended 'to improve the knowledge of natural things, and all useful Arts, Manufactures, Mechanick practices, Engynes and Inventions by Experiments'. Technology is a child of science dependent on the content and the method of science. Francis Bacon pointed to the invention of gunpowder, printing and the magnetic compass as illustrations of technological progress. He took over the ideals of his thirteenth century namesake, Roger Bacon, who saw the future great with technical inventions derived from the application of the scientific method. Francis Bacon felt that the union of the theoretical interpretation of nature and its technical control will produce 'a line and race of inventions that may in some degree subdue and overcome the necessities and miseries of humanity'. In the seventeenth century were developed such instruments as the thermometer, barometer, telescope, microscope, air-pump, electrical machine and pendulum clock.

Technology began to spread its conquests in the eighteenth century, in the period of the Industrial Revolution. The steam engine was the most important technological device of the eighteenth century. Today North America is the great continent of technology producing gigantic instruments of peace and war. These devices were intended to be used for the general enrichment of human life and the enlargement of the means of human happiness.

Modern civilisation is controlled by scientific and technical experts. The expert is the bearer and product of the great process of rationalisation which in co-operation with natural sciences, technology, economic competition and political rivalry has produced

the modern industrial society. This development burst the feudal and bourgeois society of old Europe and shaped the great colonial areas. The two wars have upset the balance of power, and today the colossal states which have adopted technological devices on a grand scale are facing each other. For man's discoveries in the field of nuclear energy offer a means of total destruction of human civilisation or an unfoldment of a future which is beyond the present dreams of mankind. If we use the fruits of science and technology for evil ends, it would be a monstrous perversion of the very spirit of science and technology. The purpose of scientific education is not to restrict a man's outlook and interests to sordid and material issues. It must recall us to a sense of the unity of mankind which alone can save it from destruction by the dreadful forces which its own discoveries have released.

#### IX. MODERN PHILOSOPHY

The scientific movement is a great illumination of the human mind and had a profound influence on philosophy and religion. Modern European philosophy arose at a time of intense scientific activity. Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) and Francis Bacon prepared the way for modern philosophy. There was a shift from the theocentric to the anthropocentric approach. While medieval philosophy moved wholly within the Christian doctrine and was produced by Churchmen, modern philosophy which was increasingly secular in character was developed by laymen. The nature and presuppositions of science became the central problem of modern Western philosophy. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was conscious of the great role which science could play in the life of mankind. His view of scientific method was experimental, and inductive. While he admitted the utility of mathematics for science, he did not trust the art of deductive logic which went with it. Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon protested against the practice of deduction on the basis of a given system of ideas and advocated the observation of particular facts, the use of mathematics and the method of experiment.

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) generalised the mathematical method which had been in use in the study of mechanics and gave a mechanical view of the operations of nature. The mathematical-experimental method could not go beyond measurable phenomena. The non-measurable properties of matter like colours, smells, tastes were



regarded as subjective products of the sense organs, possessing no reality as such in the external world, while measurable quantities like mass, motion, magnitude were regarded as primary, real, objective properties of matter. For Descartes, not all measurable qualities were of the same importance.

There were certain fundamental ideas given by intuition which provided the starting point for mathematical deductions. These are motion, extension and God. 'Give me motion and extension and I will construct the world', said Descartes. God was the main foundation of his system. God made extension and put motion into the universe. The amount of motion in the universe is constant, for it was given only once to the universe at the moment of creation. Thus Descartes reached the principle of the conservation of momentum.

While Bacon adopted the empirical tradition, Descartes stressed the role which mathematics could play in science. He made notable contributions in mathematical technique and invented co-ordinate geometry.

For Descartes, all material things were machines, obeying mechanical laws, the human body no less than inorganic substances, plants and animals. Descartes admits the reality of a spiritual world in which man participates by virtue of his soul. Man shares in the mechanical and spiritual aspects of the universe. This dualism has become, since the time of Descartes, central to European thought. Descartes handed over matter to reason and science and spirit to faith and theology. In spite of this dualism, Descartes thought that the human mind was largely determined by the internal mechanisms of the body. In his *Discourse on Method*, Descartes tells us, 'the mind is so intimately dependent upon the condition and relation of the organs of the body, that if any means can ever be found to render men wiser and more ingenious than hitherto, I believe that it is in medicine they must be sought for'.

Descartes tried to answer metaphysical questions with proofs as clear and self-evident as those of mathematics. He thought he had demonstrated the existence of God and of the external world and explained the relation of matter and spirit in man and the universe. Once God created the universe He had not interfered with its working. It is wrong to think that He participates in the day to day working of the universe. Pascal was a scientist and a theologian, and he could not forgive Descartes for bringing in God to set the world in motion and then dismissing Him for the rest. No wonder,



Descartes' books were placed on the index of prohibited books at Rome and at Paris.

Spinoza applied the geometrical method to the exposition of his metaphysics. Though he placed God at the centre of his system he tried to interpret the Old Testament in terms of natural laws. His work was condemned in 1656 by the leaders of the Portuguese Jewish community at Amsterdam as heretical and dangerous for the faith.

The German philosopher Leibniz (1646-1716) was one of the inventors of the differential calculus. The ultimately real was for him not an unchanging substance beneath all changes and differences. The principle of change and difference was itself a force. He was of the view that our world is the best of all possible worlds and is 'based on consideration of maximum and minimum, such that the greatest effect is obtained with the least, so to speak, expenditure'.

Locke in his *Essay on Human Understanding* (1690) pictured the mind of man at birth as a blank sheet of paper on which stimuli from the external world make their impress, leading to thoughts and ideas. His view was an application of the mechanical philosophy. Voltaire said of him that 'no one has proved better than he that one can have the geometrical spirit without the aid of geometry'. Locke's theory of psychology raised three important problems: (1) How could the different impressions of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell combine to give a single sensation? (2) How are sensations translated into ideas? (3) How are ideas combined together?

Locke did not deny the value of religion. For some centuries there have been attempts to reconcile scientific thought with theological opinion. In 1696 the English Parliament passed an Act which made it a penal offence to deny the divinity of Jesus. But many people were unorthodox in their private opinions. Religious toleration emerged in different degrees in different parts of Europe.

Molyneux and Berkeley in Ireland and Diderot and Condillac in France developed Locke's view. The problem of how ideas combined together to produce thoughts was taken up by Hume in his *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739) where he said: 'There appear to be only three principles of connection among ideas; namely Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause or Effect'. These laws in psychology are a counterpart of the laws of mechanics in physics.

Hume looked upon the self not as the knower but as the known. It is a series of ideas and impressions 'which succeed one another with inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement'. If the self were only a flux or succession of mental events, no synthesis or knowledge is possible. Knowledge does not come to us as an integrated whole; it comes to us in fragments which require to be synthesised. No synthesis is possible if the self does not possess unity and identity. On the hypothesis of Hume, no knowledge is possible. We cannot have certainty; we only reach probable conclusions.

The physician David Hartley (1705-1757) in his *Observations on Man* published in 1749, tried to solve the problem of how impressions on the sense organs become transformed into ideas. By the habitual occurrence of a series of sensations, any one sensation could set off a train of associated ideas.

This theory was used in France for the project of bettering the lot of mankind. If all men were equal at birth as Locke had suggested, they became unequal through unequal environmental influences. Helvetius (1715-1771) ascribes the inequalities of men to differences in education and affirms in his work *On the Mind* that 'for man to be happy and powerful is only a matter of perfecting the science of education'. Progress of man through enlightenment was the motive of Voltaire's works and the *Encyclopaedia* edited by Diderot. Voltaire wrote that 'reason and industry will progress more and more, that useful arts will be improved, that the evils which have afflicted men and prejudices which are not their least scourge, will gradually disappear among all who govern nations'. Diderot stated that the aims of *Encyclopaedia* were 'to bring together all the knowledge scattered over the surface of the earth, and thus to build up a general system of thought, so that the works of past ages shall not be useless, and our descendants becoming more instructed, shall become more virtuous and happier'.

Kant attempts to meet the sceptical arguments of Berkeley and Hume by emphasising the central role of self. Kant distinguishes two kinds of self, the pure ego or the knower, the 'I' and the empirical ego, the known, or the 'me'. It is the self that synthesises the fragmentary and successive data and turns them into objects of knowledge. Kant distinguishes three levels of cognitive activity, the Aesthetic with the forms of perception, the Analytic with the categories of the understanding and the Dialectic with the Ideas of

Reason. The categories of the understanding are *a priori* conceptions, structural tendencies of the mind without which we cannot have knowledge of sensible phenomena. They are not logical abstractions but active manifestations of the unifying principle of mind. For their exercise the categories need the sense-manifold. A transcendent use of these *a priori* principles is illegitimate. They apply to the objects of sense as conforming to the universal conditions of a possible experience (phenomena) and not to things as such (noumena).

While the categories of the understanding are immanent, i.e. adequately realised in experience, the Ideas of Reason are transcendent. No objects can be presented in experience that are adequate to them. They represent the aspirations of thought which are not realised in the details of sensible experience, the demands and dreams that we cannot relinquish. There can be no *science* of objects answering to the Ideas of Reason though we are obliged to act as if there were such objects. Our cognitive life rests on a faith and a hope. We cannot prove that God exists or that the soul is immortal. Yet our life would come to naught if we did not act and think as if they were true. Moral life gives a deeper meaning to the Ideas of Reason. In his *Critique of Judgment*, Kant suggests the possibility of intuitive understanding in which there would be no distinction between the particular and the universal.

The Ideas of Reason are formative principles in the world of experience, akin to the transcendental Ideas of Plato, the contents of the Creative mind of God, the final causes of the world. They are not the products of our imagination but are the constituents of reality.

Hegel makes a distinction between scientific knowledge and philosophical thinking. The former is partial and imperfect, the latter is concrete and full. The things of the world are phenomenal for both Kant and Hegel but for different reasons. Hegel writes: 'According to Kant, the things that we know about are to us appearances only, and we can never know their essential nature, which belongs to another world which we cannot approach. . . . The true statement of the case is rather as follows: The things of which we have direct consciousness are mere phenomena, not for us only but in their own nature; and the true and proper case of these things, finite as they are, is to have their existence founded not in themselves but in the universal divine Idea. This view of things, it is true, is as idealist as

Kant's but in contradistinction to the subjective idealism of the Critical Philosophy should be termed Absolute Idealism'.<sup>1</sup> For Hegel, dialectic is a criticism of the categories. If we are compelled to pass on from the lower categories, it is because the lower categories are not independent existents but abstractions from the highest which alone is independent and real. Perceptual and logical forms of knowledge are abstract because they are partial. No category except the highest category can be completely rational and real. The Absolute Idea is the highest category and is present in all reality and in all phenomena of experience, external and internal. It is because this Absolute Idea is immanent in all experience that we cannot rest content with any lower, inadequate category. We are always working up to the complete. The mind implicitly contains the whole from which partial truths are abstracted.

The philosophical idealism of Germany, especially of Fichte and Hegel alleged to possess complete knowledge of what God is and desires. This led to the abandonment of a sense of mystery and increased confidence in human reason. Hegel says, Freedom, Spirit and God are objects of knowledge for the philosopher.

The eighteenth century enlightenment was called the Age of Reason. The universe was explained as a rational order in the light of its own indwelling principles. There was the confident belief that man is the measure of all things and the highest ideal is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Even religion took a humanitarian character. The Methodists in England, the Pietists in the Germanies and the Society of Friends insisted on the need to improve social conditions, reform the jails and the hospitals, mitigate the penal laws, abolish slavery. The rationalists and the religious people both sought a greater measure of social justice. The American Revolution, though it occurred in a period of secular and even anti-Christian enlightenment, did not break with the Christian tradition as the clauses in the Declaration of Independence testify. A real break was attempted by the radical leaders of the French Revolution which closely followed the American. In 1770, Seguier, the *Avocat Generale* confessed that 'the philosophers have shaken the throne and upset the altars through changing public opinion'. The French Revolution came in 1789.

Many people believed that in the Revolution the world was being

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia*, Sec. 45.

made anew. Wordsworth describes the general reaction to the fall of the Bastille :

Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,  
France standing on the top of Golden hours,  
And human nature seeming born again.

It was regarded as not a mere revolt against misery and misgovernment but a unique rebirth of humanity. The idea that sovereignty rested in the people's will caught on and societies and institutions which had survived unchanged from feudal times were destroyed or undermined. The spirit of democratic nationalism spread.

The ideal of fraternity fascinated the idealists. 'In that blessed day', wrote Godwin, 'there will be neither disease, anguish, melancholy, nor resentment. Every man will seek with ineffable ardour the good of all'. Condorcet wrote his *History of the Progress of the Human Spirit* in 1794 where he stated that 'human perfectibility is in reality indefinite; that the progress of this perfectibility henceforth independent of any power that might wish to stop it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has placed us'. The indefinite progress of mankind was assured in view of the mechanical stability of the solar system assumed by Laplace. While he developed the theory of the evolution of the solar system (1796), Cabanis envisaged the mental faculties of the human being as the product of his developmental history. Lamarck (1744-1829) held that animals were machines which had evolved to higher forms, according to the law of progress. He put forward the theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) in his *Zoonomia* (1794) applied the theory of progress to the development of the plant and animal species. Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin believed in an inner force within each organism driving it forwards to higher forms.

The greatest classifier of plants in the eighteenth century was Linnaeus (1707-1778). He applied his classification to both plant and animal species. Buffon (1707-1788) held that all artificial classifications were erroneous. 'The error consists in a failure to understand nature's processes, which always take place by gradations. . . . It is possible to descend by almost insensible degrees from the most perfect creature to the most formless matter', said Buffon in his introduction to *Natural History*.

Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) popularised Darwinism in Germany.

Naturalist determinism became a widespread belief. The universe began as stellar gas among the whirling nebulae and slowly over long ages, life emerged and led through legged fish, land animals and mammals to primitive man. These successive products of evolution represent more elaborate adaptations to natural surroundings. Mind, thought and values are all the products of the working of a closed material system functioning according to rigidly predetermined laws. This view of mechanical materialism yielded to the dialectical materialism of Marx. Karl Marx gives us a picture of history as a materially conditioned process. Man is a product of material needs, class interests and property rights. Dialectical materialism is the force driving mankind to the processes of change. To millions of working classes, Marx's message of the terrestrial paradise of socialism gives a new meaning of life. The Marxists adopt the scientific method of social analysis and the techniques for political mass action.

The marvellous scientific discoveries and technological achievements have led many to accept the view that the real is the material, what can be weighed and measured. Propositions which cannot be empirically verified are neither true nor false. Truth belongs only to the propositions that are empirically verifiable, i.e. the statements of physical science or observation. Propositions of ethics and metaphysics are simply devoid of meaning.<sup>1</sup> There is a distinction between statements which refer to actual objects and emotive statements which are uttered to excite certain emotional attitudes in the hearer. With reference to statements of poetry we do not ask for their truth but raise the question of the attitudes they excite.

The conception of philosophy as an attempt to give a sustained and systematic account of the universe is no more fashionable. It is the task of science to give us information about the universe. The

<sup>1</sup> This view can be traced to Bacon and Hume. Bacon said: 'All the received philosophical systems are but so many stage-plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion. Nor is it only of the systems now in vogue, or of the ancient sects and philosophies that I speak; for many more plays of the same kind may yet be composed and in like artificial manner set forth'. *Novum Organum*. Here Bacon contrasts philosophical speculations with trustworthy scientific generalisations. Hume, in the same spirit, remarks: Here indeed lies the justest and most plausible objection against a considerable part of metaphysics that they are not properly a science, but arise either from the fruitless efforts of human vanity, which would penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding, or from the craft of popular superstitions which, being unable to defend themselves on fair ground, raise these intangling brambles to cover and protect their weakness. *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding*, Sec. I.



function of philosophy is at best analysis, clarification. The philosopher does not ask whether there is God, soul or the world. He asks about the meaning of saying that there is God, soul or the world.

While intellectuals profess to be satisfied with mechanistic materialism or logical empiricism, faith is falling away from the common people. While the scientifically trained range themselves on the side of secular humanism, others adopt nihilistic aberrations from the religious tradition. Flight from God, an abdication of metaphysics and a positivist attitude of mind are the characteristics of our time.

A naturalistic philosophy was the dominant attitude in the West at the opening of the twentieth century. Man pictured himself in the image of the machine.<sup>1</sup> There is a conflict between two different views of man. With the sense of values and hunger for eternity, he is the most concrete embodiment of the divine on earth. This is the tradition of the Upanishads and Plato linked with Christianity in its many forms. There is the other view which dates from the Renaissance and draws its strength from the tremendous discoveries of science and inventions of technology, which looks upon man as a being launched without his consent on the river of life, thrown into a world of forces where he feels that he can survive only by an increasing control over forces with which he has to contend. The two basic impulses require to be reconciled if we are to produce a stable society. Both these are exaggerated in an aggressive naturalism, secular humanism and an artificial supernaturalism, Neo-Thomism, Fundamentalism or Neo-Barthianism. We seem to be ready to accept any infallibility, whether it be of the Pope or the Bible or Marx. But in their conduct even those who profess the latter behave like the former. The great power which we now possess could be used for transforming this earth into a paradise if we are able to overcome our hates and jealousies. But we are afraid that by some act of madness or miscalculation—there are lunatics in every country—we may bring about the suicide of civilisation. The need for moral control, spiritual discipline is most urgent. The conflict between Greece and Galilee, between mind and spirit in Beatty's words is still unresolved. That we are aware of our predicament is the reason for hope.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Strausz-Hupé: 'Man is a thing, life is an absurdity, nature is an aggregate of facts, society is a shell within which each man faces alone a crowd of strangers met by chance or statistical accident'. *The Estrangement of Western Man* (1953) p. 137.

## LECTURE III

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# EAST AND WEST

### I. WESTERN INFLUENCE ON THE EAST

Science and technology are among the basic factors in the moulding of the modern world. In the last 400 years, the Western man has carried his civilisation into remote corners, and brought under his influence all the continents. Till about A.D. 1500 there was considerable similarity between the East and the West. But diversity has now arisen owing to the rapid growth of technology. History in these four centuries became European history; the rest of the world was colonial history. Hegel's words have been confirmed, 'The Europeans have sailed round the world and for them it is a sphere. Whatever has not yet fallen under their sway is either not worth the trouble, or it is destined to fall under it'. Europe had dominated Asia and Africa and peopled Australia and America.

The period which followed the opening up of the sea route to India round the Cape of Good Hope and the discovery of America was one of unrestricted expansion and control of the great spaces of the earth by the Western people. It is sometimes described as one of aggression by the West on the East. European traders arrived in Eastern countries and set up forts, factories and naval bases. The West was almost entirely responsible for the development of communications. The steamships of the Western countries carry most of the world's freight and passengers across the seas. Their air-ships fly across the oceans and continents. Their locomotives, telegraph wires, electrical inventions, agricultural implements are found in Asia and Africa. The products of their factories supply the acquired needs of distant peoples. Automobiles, sewing machines, radios, movies, typewriters, fountain pens, cameras, patent medicines are used among all peoples.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the *Communist Manifesto*: 'The bourgeoisie . . . has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts and Gothic cathedrals. . . . The bourgeoisie . . . draws all nations into civilisation. The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together'.

The impact of Western powers on older cultures, though subjecting them to political and economic domination, evoked their long dormant vital forces and implanted in them ideas of nationalism. It is the West that called forth the forces of resistance to its domination and endowed the subject peoples with the skills and institutions which could be most effectively used against herself. The Taiping and the Boxer rebellions, India's struggle for freedom and the rise of modern Japan are the triumphs of Westernisation. Japan transformed herself in a few decades into an industrialised modern power on the Western model. The American Declaration of Independence, the French and the Russian revolutions, the Atlantic Charter and the preamble of the United Nations Charter inspired millions of people to cast off their yoke and achieve independence, political, economic and social. A new sense of confidence was induced in men's minds that it is not beyond their capacity to achieve their objective, when Russia was defeated by Japan. When non-European troops were used in the two wars, a sense of equality was roused of which the consequences were not immediately realised. Thus Western domination sowed the seeds of its own disintegration.

The impact of Western culture on Asian society is the basis of Asian nationalism as well as of Asian solidarity. The Hindu religious revival is partly the result of Western research, partly reaction against Western domination and partly the revolt against Christian missionary propaganda. The members of the Society of Jesus were entrusted with the mission to East Asia. In the later years of the sixteenth century Francis Xavier went to Goa and Japan. In 1582 Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit reached Macao and in 1601 reached Peking where he died in 1610. He and his colleagues identified themselves with the manners and customs of the Chinese scholarly society and translated many Chinese works on mathematics, hydraulics and astronomy. After European settlements started in the East, Christian missions expanded their activities though some of them used their work as an instrument of economic expansion. Livingstone's cry of Commerce and Christianity confirms this view. He felt that civilisation by which he meant Christianity could be brought to the tribes of Central Africa only by opening up routes for trade. For him Christianity did not mean so much doctrine as 'a diffused philanthropy', medicine, trade, education. The colonial peoples of Asia and Africa were also attracted by Christianity as they thought that Christianity was the religion and so presumably the practical inspiration of the

greater military efficiency and scientific power of the dominating West. The Right Reverend Stephen Neill writes: 'It is no accident that the "great century" of the expansion of the Christian Church was also the great century of European expansion'.<sup>1</sup> In many cases missionary penetration was the spearhead of political control. Dr. Stephen Neill says: 'The Church in South India has been largely built up by the work of the village teacher-catechist, by far the greater part of whose salary has been met from government grants'. With the rise of Asian and African nationalism, feeling is increasing against missions which were supported by governments either on prudential grounds or on the honest conviction that the people would be better for the acceptance of Christianity. Naturally in times of political tension, Christian churches which were financially dependent on the Government tended to be out of sympathy with the struggles of peoples desiring to be free. So the criticism was heard that they were the agents of the imperialist powers. Now that independence is achieved, doubts about the divided allegiance of Christians have disappeared and they are today in many nations respected citizens. If in India they wish to become the leaders of the community, they must sympathise with the revolutionary fervour of the peoples.

The most important event of the Second World War is not the defeat of the Axis Powers, Germany, Italy and Japan, who are already regaining their former status and influence in international affairs. It is the rise of the new powers in Asia, China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, the Philippines.

In spite of centuries of foreign domination, the outstanding fact about Asia and Africa is their unspeakable misery, their gross poverty and illiteracy, their famines and diseases. The one redeeming feature is the longing of the peoples of these areas to escape from their ghastly sub-human condition. There is a sense that the evils from which they suffer are preventable and should not be tolerated. They believe that they should adopt the outlook of science and the methods of technology, to raise themselves from their present plight. It is true that the technical superiority of the West secured the triumph of its arms. While the East repudiates the military conquests by the West, and the enforced domination, it welcomes the locomotive, the dynamo and the aeroplane. While it is eager to throw away the conquerors, it accepts the instruments of their conquest,

<sup>1</sup> *East and West Review*, April 1954, p. 35.

the mechanical arts, the technological devices, and the political institutions. They wish to use these to overcome poverty, to widen economic opportunity and to improve standards of nutrition, health and sanitation. In their eagerness to make up for the lost time and catch up with the advanced nations of the world, the East is accepting modern technological methods.<sup>1</sup>

Dissimilar conditions have led to the acceptance of technology both by East and West; the East to escape from political subjugation and economic and social backwardness, the West to maintain its superiority. These conditions threaten to subject man to the tyranny of the machine and material success. Personality is losing against power.

East-West contacts have not been one-way processes. New influences affected the West. Rembrandt copied Moghul drawings and delicate new crafts were introduced from Japan. Eastern languages began to be studied for purposes of business and administration. Christian missions became interested in the thought of the non-Christian lands. The Analects of Confucius, the literature of the Vedas, the Tripitaka of the Buddhists, The Qurān and other Islamic works had European translations. Unsuspected wisdom and spiritual depth were found in alien religions. Leibniz pleaded for interchange of ideas between Europe and China. Voltaire looked upon Confucius as a holy sage, a philosopher, prophet and statesman who preaches no miracles and teaches only virtue.

## II. COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY

Eastern countries are adopting not only the spirit of science and the gadgets of technology but also the political arrangements which have found favour in the West, liberal democracy or communism.

Today, when reference is made to East-West relations, we do not have in mind the Orient and the Occident, Asia and Europe, but the political East and the political West of Europe. When Christianity was the prevalent religion of Europe, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant forms represented the West while the Greek Church and the Russian Orthodox Church represented the East. Both these had a common origin, the Judaic-Hellenic. They have more in common with each other than either of these has with any other civilised

<sup>1</sup> The late Professor Charles Beard, writing in 1928, in a book on *Whither Mankind?* said: 'If, in due time, the East smashes the West on the battlefield it will be because the East has completely taken over the technology of the West, gone it one better and thus become a Western civilisation'.

society. Even so, the split between the Communist East and the Democratic West is a split within the Western world.

The pedigree of Communism can be traced to Plato, the New Testament, the Levellers of Cromwell's day, Ricardo, Adam Smith, Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Engels, Lenin. Some of the characteristic features of Communism are those of the West.

The Greek mind was of a dialectical order. It laid stress on the primacy of reason. Communism claims to utilise a scientific method and analysis. It is possessed of a sense of certainty, a sense of its own infallibility.

Humanism has been a character of Western thought from the Greek times. The Greeks concerned themselves with social conditions and postulates. The Marxists wish to bring about a perfect society on earth. They protest against the effects on the working classes of the industrial revolution, starvation wages, child and female labour, over-crowded slums, destruction of family life. In the name of social justice, they criticise the capitalist order. Lenin says that the cry of a single child in distress condemns our world.

The appeal of Communism is not merely to the material needs of man but to the human desire for status, for equality, for freedom from domination, or oppression, political and economic. Marx thinks of a new man, the truly human man, who has never before existed, the man who will be rid of his self-estrangement. Communism professes to offer to man a matchless opportunity for satisfying the deepest desire of man which now happens to be frustrated. The noblest motive in human nature is to invest the petty transient personal life with abiding spiritual quality by devoting it to some cause worthier than any that has been visible on his mental horizon since the eclipse of religion and the rise of materialism. That ideal is the attainment of an earthly paradise, the elevation of the human race. Marx in one of his human moments looked forward to a future socialist society where 'the fragmentary man would be replaced by the completely developed individual, one for whom different social functions are but alternative forms of activity. Men could fish, hunt or engage in literary criticism without becoming professional fishermen, hunters or critics'.

The logic which drives a missionary cause to aggressive propaganda is nothing new in history. 'Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature'. Communism seems to be secularised Christianity.



The law of contradiction lays down that contradictories cannot subsist together. The conflict between the Communists and the non-Communists is on the same pattern as the conflict between Athens and Sparta, Rome and Carthage, the Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the Barbarian, the Christian and the heathen, the Protestant and the Catholic. Today it is between parliamentary democracies and people's democracies. This view is based on the philosophy of either-or. It divides the world into two opposite camps—the kingdoms of light and of darkness. A fanatic's mind is dark and his heart is hard and he wishes to stamp out his enemy. To call our enemies unbelievers gives us a sort of moral rearmament. Dichotomy has been an element in the mental make-up of the Western man. One of Dostoevsky's characters in *The Brothers Karamazov* observes: 'This craving for community of worship is the chief misery of every man individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time . . . put away your gods and come and worship ours, or we will kill you and your gods. And so it will be to the end of the world, even when gods disappear from earth'.

We shall have heresies and persecution of heresies so long as we have a sacred doctrine and an authorised body of interpreters. If dogmas are the expressions of final and infallible truth, we cannot escape from doctrinal controversies and inquisitorial methods. During the early centuries of Christianity, seven councils were held to define the true doctrine and pronounce against heresies.

We hear often of confessions by those charged with guilt and demands for extreme punishments. These are of a piece with confessions of sin and repentance in the early Christian Church. If we realise the essentially religious character of the Russian soul, confessions of crimes against the State will not come as a surprise.

The main, though not the exclusive, emphasis of the West is on scientific reason, humanism, missionary propaganda and a division of the world into opposite camps. Communism exaggerates all these features.

In his work on the teachings of Karl Marx,<sup>1</sup> Lenin writes that Marx 'was the genius who continued and completed the three chief ideological currents of the nineteenth century, represented respectively by the three most advanced countries of humanity: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines'.

<sup>1</sup> 1914.

Not only is the creed of Communism a product of Western thought, but its propagation is also due to leaders who were trained in Western capitals, Berlin, Paris, Geneva. In the first world war, it was the German High Command who put the future Russia into a railway coach, sealed it and sent it out to explode in the then Finnish station of Petrograd.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, somewhat strange that Communism should be treated as an Eastern doctrine, though it is now spreading in the East.<sup>2</sup>

It is incorrect to assume that parliamentary democracy is the only form of government which is consistent with the tradition of the West. It would be to forget the tyranny of Greece, of the Italian city-states of the Middle Ages down to the dictatorships of our own time. The heritage of the West includes all types of governments.

It is wrong to think that if Communist countries became Christian, there would be no wars. The Roman State became Christian at the time of Constantine and was almost continually at war till it ceased to exist. History does not show that Christian states are less warlike than others.

There is no doubt that parliamentary democracy is the most civilised form of government. It enables us to bring about drastic and even revolutionary social and economic changes through peaceful processes. If we believe in democracy, it requires us to effect social justice within nations and extend democratic liberties to other nations. Liberal democracy is easy to profess but difficult to practise. If democracies acquire honesty of purpose and fervour of faith, they will liberate oppressed nationalities, strive for racial harmony and assist underdeveloped countries to achieve economic progress. If the democratic nations of the world abide by their faith in democracy, then opposition to democracies will diminish. To millions of people in colonial areas and to the working classes throughout the world, the Communist system holds up promises of social equality, political freedom and abolition of economic privilege. Are not these the very heart of democracy?

<sup>1</sup> The British Foreign Office was certain that the Bolsheviks were the paid agents of Imperial Germany and Bolshevism was 'a movement fostered solely for the furtherance of German ends'.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Halecki in his *The Limits and Divisions of European History* tried to thrust Russia completely out of Europe: 'Whatever we may think', he says, 'about the more or less European character of the Empire which lasted from Peter I to Nicholas II, the "Red Tsardom" created in November 1917, after a real but vain attempt towards Westernisation in March of the same year, was and remained non-European, if not anti-European'.

What is necessary is a sacrificial faith in democracy. We should give up attitudes of race superiority and condemn and not condone racial oppression abroad. We should be willing to accept the peoples of other nations on a plane of equality, whatever be their race or the colour of their skins. We must assist all the countries which are struggling to raise the standards, social, economic and cultural, of their people. We must try to solve international disputes in a peaceful way. The war-weary peoples of the world do not wish to feel that we have given up all hopes of peace and friendship among nations.

We cannot say that Communist states are the workers' paradise in which all forms of discrimination and class privileges are abolished. Ultimate power in these states resides in the hands of a small party whose authority is practically unlimited. Their policies are implemented by the administrative bureaucracy. The party leader decides everything for everybody with the result that the whole flowering of human life is rigidly controlled. If people wish to be governed in that style, so long as they do not interfere with the way of life of others, we must learn to live in friendship with them. We should establish a world order without war, without standardisation, regimentation or tyranny. We must work for a federal constitution in which all people might hope to have a fair share in the conduct of human affairs.

We are unable to establish points of contact with Communist countries. If we are unable to communicate, we live in isolation and isolation breeds fear, suspicion and hate. In the present ailing world the greatest evil is political parochialism. In a society which has learnt to navigate the air and split the atom, we owe it to ourselves to work for human solidarity.

In former ages, the world consisted of a number of societies slowly evolving on their own lines. Out of these varied experiments have come the treasures of wisdom, art and science which we have inherited. Now the world is converging into one society. This is true in spite of the fact that the two groups are hurling defiance against each other. Even the two challenging systems have much in common and are moving in the same direction. The Russian system which is anxious to preserve its identity, ethos and genius finds that it can hold its own against the Western democracies by mastering technology which is the source of their power. Ten years ago, when Germany capitulated on May 8, 1945, the *London Times* wrote: 'So passes to its just doom of ignominy and ruin the most monstrous

dominion that pride, cruelty and the lust of power have ever sought to impose upon the suffering millions of the nations'. In that war, the world felt the terrible power of destruction which man has acquired through scientific knowledge uncontrolled by wisdom. With the alarming increase of the weapons of mass destruction, we cannot ignore that the brotherhood of man, the unity of nations and the indivisibility of peace are the most urgent truths and not mere platitudes. But we are filled with fear, hatred, national pride and ideological fanaticism. These are not rational states but emotional attitudes which continue to govern human behaviour. We must give up the tendency which manifests itself whenever there is a conflict that our enemies are hateful, unnatural monsters whose defeat if not extirpation is essential for the peace of the world.

Both systems as at present practised, suffer from faith in the omnipotence of mechanism and technique and the spirit of materialism. Both adopt the cult of power as an end in itself, subordinate the individual to the demands of the state, worship the nation-state. The people suffer from the tyranny of the state, whether that tyranny takes the form of military violence or commercial greed. The idolatrous worship of the nation-state is an inheritance from Greece and led the Greek world to ruin and we seem to be treading the same path. The walled-in enclosures in which we live are not nations but asylums in a world which urgently calls for unification.

When human beings deify human power and assume for themselves divine prerogatives, they court retribution. The cold war today is not with this or that nation. It is not a conflict between two nations but between two claimants for the soul of man. The spirit of materialism which we are called upon to fight is not alien to us but seems to be congenial to the whole world. The spirit which resists it is to be rediscovered by both the groups. We must establish not only over the enemy but over ourselves the authority of the principles which we deny to the enemy but we claim to possess. If our cause is the cause of the higher possibilities of the human spirit, we should incorporate that cause in our social institutions.

We should remember that men and their institutions are partly good and partly evil and when they fight they fight for causes which are also partly good and partly evil. Those who exalt naked force and who encourage the spirit of hatred overlook the fact that there is something of the divine in every man. If we do not recognise the man in our enemies, we will be nearer a war of unrestricted extermination than the foundations of universal peace.

When we speak of coexistence, we are getting beyond the Western pattern of either-or. We hold that it is possible for the two systems to live side by side influencing each other. To coexist is not to compromise or capitulate. It is to understand each other and modify each other. No social order is static, no law is enchanging, no constitution is permanent.

Since the death of Stalin, there has been a relaxation in the rigours of the Soviet system. Restrictions of travel have been modified and concessions have been made to the people in Russia. The conflicts in Korea and Indo-China have not been allowed to grow into a full scale war. Even in international organisations, the Soviet attitude has been more moderate and restrained than it used to be. A desire to negotiate with the West is visible. Given time, forbearance and comprehension, it is not unrealistic to think of a peaceful settlement. With the spread of education and rise in people's demands, a process of liberalisation, even in Communist countries, is inevitable. If it is impeded, like all totalitarian regimes, they will disappear through their own internal contradictions.

Sir Winston Churchill wrote in Moscow, on October 11, 1944, 'We have the feeling, that viewed from afar and on a grand scale, the differences between our systems will tend to get smaller and the great common ground which we share of making life richer and happier for the masses of the people is growing every year. Probably if there was peace for fifty years the differences, which now might cause such great troubles to the world, would become matters for academic discussions'.<sup>1</sup> Ten years later, on July 12, 1954, he repeated the view in the House of Commons: 'I believe that the widespread acceptance of this policy (of peaceful coexistence), may in the passage of years lead to the problems which divide the world being solved—or solving themselves as so many problems do—in a manner which would avert the mass destruction of the human race, and give time and human nature and the mercy of God their chance to win salvation for us'.

This is a time for decision and it is better for us to pray: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner' and not 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are'. Both the liberal and the Communist systems suffer from grave defects and are not likely to win the allegiance of the human race. It is necessary for us to assert our humanity, to renew our sanity, to realise that the destructive nightmare in whose grip

<sup>1</sup> *Triumph and Tragedy*, p. 203.

we are now tossing and turning is not the reality. Our present distress is the pangs for the birth of a new world. Nothing is more certain than that this civilisation will end, as many have already ended on this planet. How long it will endure is as unpredictable as is the span of human life. Whether it continues for many centuries or meets with a premature decline and untimely death depends on the effort we make. Civilisations are not subject to the blind necessity of biological old age and death. If our effort is relaxed, if discipline declines, if our inner spirit decays, we will pass out. The verdict will be 'suicide while of an unsound mind'.

Life becomes meaningful only when we grasp the character of the age we live in, see its significance, understand the objectives it sets us and strive to realise them. We are not the helpless tools of determinism. History is the story of the incalculable. Though there is no linear progression in history, though humanity renews itself from its past, it is also developing something new and unforeseen. Today we have to make a new start with our own minds and hearts.

### III. TECHNOLOGY A SERVANT, NOT MASTER

We are tempted to assume that technological progress is real progress and that material success is the criterion of civilisation. If the Eastern peoples become fascinated by machines and techniques and use them, as Western nations do, to build huge industrial organisations, large military establishments, they would get involved in power politics and drift into the danger of death. Scientific and technological civilisation brings great opportunities and great rewards but also great risks and temptations. If machines get into the saddle, all our progress will have been in vain. The problem facing us is a universal one. Both East and West are threatened with the same danger and face the same destiny. Science and technology are neither good nor bad. They are not to be tabooed but tamed and assigned their proper place. They become dangerous only if they become idols.

From that dim and distant date when a human creature struck out the first flint instrument, through all the ages until now, when man belts the globe with the radio and plans to annihilate whole cities with bombs from the sky, the course of human life has been a career of material conquest and mechanical achievement. The pen, the brush, the wheel, the spade, the plough, the boat, the lever, the pulley, the locomotive and the internal combustion engine form a continuous ascent. Nuclear fission is not anything new in principle



from, say, the discovery of fire. The machine is an expression of the victory of mind over matter. It is not an end in itself. It is a tool devised by man to give practical effect to his ideals. If our ideals are wrong, the fault is in ourselves, not in the machines. If our ideals are right, machines could be used to remove injustice, improve the lot of mankind, and help the spirit to grow into maturity. There is nothing in a motor car which requires us to drive it so fast as to kill innocent pedestrians. There is nothing in an aeroplane which compels us to drop bombs on fellowmen. There is nothing wrong with the machines as such. If they turn out to be evil, it is because we are evil.

Those who declare that the danger of our situation is the increase of machines in daily use point to the excessive *tempo* of modern civilisation, the anxiety connected with the competition of living, the precariousness of life, the drabness and monotony of the lives of many workers who are required to repeat the same movement hour after hour mechanically, the exciting nature of our amusements and the love for blinding speed and deafening noise.

The old labour-saving devices were utilised within the province of the human world. When technology is released from human control it loses its meaning and we have a triumph of the means over the end. Before the Industrial Revolution, men controlled the instruments and made complete objects. They took pleasure in the exercise of their skill. Their work was sacramental. About such work, Hegel says: 'from the merely bodily movement of the dance to the stupendous and gigantic works of architecture . . . all these works fall into the category of sacrifice . . . the very activity is an offering; no longer of a purely external thing but of the inner subjectivity . . . in this producing the sacrifice is spiritual activity and the effort which, as a negation of the particular self-consciousness, holds fast to the purpose that lives within and in imagination, and brings it forth to outward view'.

In the technological civilisation, where we concentrate on one minute part of the whole, our work is deprived of the breath of soul. In the race to speed up production, work in the factories is reduced to such tiny components that no skill or intelligence is needed. This repetitive work has brought to millions of workers boredom, fatigue and monotony. The workers lose their personal character and live on the surface of consciousness. We do not bring out the best in the human being. Besides in an age anxious for higher standards, we are

overlooking the essential value of a simple and austere life. The importance of an individual does not depend on his possessions but on his way of living. India has stressed the values of contentment and self-control in regard to material needs and worldly ambition. Any one who is lost in this technological civilisation whether as a producer or a consumer is de-personalised, deprived of his roots, torn out of his natural context, thrown as it were into an empty space. To preserve the infinite value of the individual, the dignity and rights of man, the freedom of the spirit in an age of technology is not easy. This is possible only with the revival of faith, which is the fulfilling of the spirit in the depths of man, in which man is linked above and beyond himself with the origin of his being.

Unfortunately, some of the leaders of our age who are fascinated by the triumphs of science and technology speak of man as a purely mechanical material being, a creature made up of automatic reflexes. They emphasise the more earthly propensities of human beings and seem to be unaware of the higher sanctity that lives in them. Many of our age suffer from loss of faith. They are the spiritually displaced, the culturally uprooted, the traditionless. Being rooted nowhere they suffer an intense loneliness and so seek comradeship anywhere. They become tribal; only the modern tribe is larger than any country. It embraces continents. The unsheltered beings who are in a mood of defiance or in the despair of nihilism are exploited by the new prophets of earthly paradise.

Our boundless ability in mastering our material environment is of infinitely less importance to us than our relations with ourselves and our fellowmen. The possession of reason is not a guarantee of our humanity. To become truly human, we need something more than reason.

We cannot base the new civilisation on science and technology alone. They do not furnish a reliable foundation. We must learn to live from a new basis, if we wish to avoid the catastrophe that threatens us. We must discover the reserves of spirituality, respect for human personality, the sense of the sacred found in all religious traditions and use them to fashion a new type of man who uses the instruments he has invented with a renewed awareness that he is capable of greater things than mastery of nature. The service to which man must return is man himself, the spirit in him. It is not enough to feed the human animal, or to train the human mind. We must also attend to the human spirit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For St. Paul, man is 'spirit and soul and body', *I Thessalonians* V. 23.

## IV. CREATIVE RELIGION

While Europe is threatened with new dangers, Asia and Africa are being transformed by the impact on them of Western ideas and technical skill. The world is becoming increasingly interconnected and cultures and civilisations are mingling. To think that any one way of life is the only way seems to be the height of egocentricity. The different geniuses of the people need not be reduced to a dead level of uniformity. They reveal different qualities. Our task is not to displace one way of life by another but to share the treasures of which each is the guardian.

There are no fundamental distinctions between the East and the West. Each one of us is both Eastern and Western. East and West are not two historical and geographical concepts. They are two possibilities which every man in every age carries within himself, two movements of the human spirit. There is tension in the nature of man between his scientific and religious impulses. This tension or tumult is not a disaster but a challenge and an opportunity.

Each one of us is both religious and rational. There have been outstanding scientific contributions from the East and notable religious gifts from the West. At best it is only a difference of emphasis. Mind and spirit are both qualities of human nature. They have not yet attained an equilibrium.<sup>1</sup> There is today a schism in the soul between mind and spirit. A society is stable when its different components, economic and political, cultural and social, are in harmony. If these elements fall into discord, the social order disintegrates.

The hopeful and the distressing features of our age are worldwide and not peculiar to the East or the West. If the purpose of the world is to be realised, all nations require to go through a process of inner renewal. World unity cannot be achieved only through the United Nations Organisation and its agencies. Local solutions are not enough. Everything hangs together. Only total peace can prevent total war. There is the religious view for which the East has stood, and which is not unknown in the West, that man with his sense of values is the most concrete embodiment of the divine on earth. This view has suffered from a misunderstanding of the spirit of science

<sup>1</sup> H. G. Wood, in his contribution to the book, *Has the Church Failed?* writes: 'In spite of the contribution of many profound, honest and courageous Christian thinkers and teachers during the last hundred years, in general, the Christian mind has not yet adequately come to terms with the scientific temper and with modern knowledge'. p. 153.

which has resulted in the intellectual devastation of spiritual life, the drying out of creative energies.

Great spiritual revivals occur through the fusion of different traditions. In Clement's metaphor the Christian Church itself was the confluence of two rivers, the Hellenistic and the Jewish. The impact of Christianity converted the disintegrating Græco-Roman world into a new community. The common enclosure of all beings in space and time, through the occupation of the earth's surface gives us the physical basis and makes possible the unity of mankind. This latter is not a fact but a task. The diffusion of ideas and implements is making for intellectual unity. But human solidarity and coherence are possible only through the radiant moments of the profound revelations of spirit which work like a ferment in the course of history. They constitute the goal and justification of the human endeavour for world coherence. The meeting of East and West today may produce a spiritual renaissance and a world community that is struggling to be born.

The present conditions of the world, the universal acceptance of the scientific method, studies in comparative religion, the challenge of world unity are producing in all religions a movement of religious creativity. Progressive thinkers of different faiths are getting together in a common endeavour to realise the good life through truth and love. The world is groping not for the narrow, stunted religion of the dogmatic schools, not one of fanaticism that is afraid of the light but for a creative spiritual religion. It should not be inconsistent with the spirit of science. It should foster humanist ideals and make for world unity.

A true understanding of science supports a religion of spirit. Science is not an entirely self-moving process; or an unconscious instrument of historical change. The development of science is due to the genius of the individual who has knowledge, skill and values. Man is not master of the universe because he can split the atom. He can split the atom because he has that in him which is far superior to the atom. The material achievements stand as witnesses to what the human spirit can accomplish. Again, these achievements are the outcome of severe mental and moral discipline, disinterested devotion to truth, a spirit of dedication as well as creative imagination.

The conflict between science and religion is due to historical circumstances. In the past scientists have suffered from religious and

political tyrannies. Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake, Galileo was imprisoned and threatened and even today scientists are discouraged by threats of political inquisition or moral ostracism from speaking the truth. If the release of nuclear energy is not welcomed as opening a new era in man's mastery of nature and its powers for the common good but is looked upon as a new threat to mankind, it is because of the overpowering influence of nationalist dogmas. Scientists must stand against all tyranny, determined to preserve the integrity of science and prevent its perversion from its proper beneficent use and save civilisation from misusing science for its own destruction. God is truth and the service of truth is the service of God.<sup>1</sup>

Both religion and science affirm the unity of nature. The central assumption of science is the intuition of religion that nature is intelligible. When we study the processes of nature we are impressed by their order and harmony and are led to a belief in the divine reality. St. Thomas put it, 'By considering what God has made we can—first of all—catch a glimpse of the divine wisdom which has in some measure impressed a certain likeness to itself upon them'. We should see in the order and constancy, the beauty and pattern of nature, the divine wisdom and not in the exceptional and the bizarre. To suggest that the whole course of history is bound up with some unique event which happened at one time and in one place in a universe which has had nearly 6,000 million years of existence may strain the scientific conscience of even ordinary people. Heaven mingles with earth from the very start.

Goethe tells us that Faust investigated all branches of human knowledge, found no answers that would satisfy him and reached the place of *nothing* in his quest for truth. He exclaims: 'And here I am at last, a very fool, with useless learning curst, no wiser than at first'. His learning proves useless, his quest meaningless. He is faced with despair. He opens an ancient book and his eyes fall on the seal of Solomon—the two triangles placed upside down, signifying the interpenetration of lower and higher nature. A change comes over him and he exclaims: 'Ha, what new life divine, intense, floods in a moment every sense. I feel the dawn of youth again. . . . Was it a

<sup>1</sup> 'It is to him who masters our minds by the force of truth and not to those who enslave them by violence that we owe our reverence' said Voltaire. 'Minds are conquered not by arms but by greatness of soul' said Spinoza. *Satyam eva jayate nāntam*. Truth alone conquers, not untruth. This is the motto of the Indian nation.

God who wrote these signs?' Earth and heaven are intermingled.<sup>1</sup> He has a new understanding of the visible world. Even at the moment when his journey had led him to darkness, a new light is revealed.

Science is empirical; it is non-dogmatic. It is openminded. Religious truths which are commended to us should not be mixed up with incredible dogmas. They must be based on experience, not of the physical world but of the religious reality. Even the concepts of science acquire their validity in experience. Experience is not limited to perceptual experience or the date of introspection. It should take into account para-normal phenomena and spiritual insights.

If scientific truth is what works in experience, religious truth also can be put to the same test. If we take the raw material of human nature and process it through detachment, humility and love, knowledge of God is attained. Religious exercises are intended to produce religious results. Albert Schweitzer observes: 'Rational thinking which is free from assumptions ends in mysticism'.<sup>2</sup>

The Eastern emphasis on religion as experience or life is being increasingly accepted by the religious people of all denominations. It is not faith but works that are needed. Not all those who say Lord, Lord, but those who do the will of God.<sup>3</sup> Talmud has it: 'Would that they had forgotten my name and done that which I commanded of them'. The utterly superficial character of our religious faith was given a practical demonstration in the Second World War when adherents of religions dragged themselves down to incredible depths.

To conform to the will of the Supreme, personal sanctification is necessary. The flame of spirit must be kindled in each human soul. 'Thus saith the Lord God . . . I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them an heart of flesh'.<sup>4</sup> The way to this spiritual change is through detachment which develops the qualities of truth and honesty, chastity and sobriety, mercy and forgiveness. So long as we are

<sup>1</sup> 'Eternity enters into time, and it is in time that all movement takes place. . . . Eternity is not limited by the conditions of time and is eternal in virtue of its cyclical recurrence'. *Hermetica* Asclepius III.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Civilisation* (1923).

<sup>3</sup> Oliver Cromwell in a letter to his son from Ireland on April 2, 1650 writes: 'The true knowledge is not literal or speculative, but the inward transforming the mind to it'. See G. M. Trevelyan, *An Autobiography and Other Essays* (1949) p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezekiel* XI. 16 and 19.



dominated by our own passions and desires we will flout our neighbour, never leave him in peace, build institutions and societies which mirror our violent impulses, aggression and greed. The change from self-centredness to God-centredness brings with it a peace and radiance of living. We reach the deepest vision into the nature of the Real by devotion, contemplation and detachment. The basic element in religion is not the intellectual acceptance of dogmatic principles or historic events. These are but the preparation for the experience which affects our entire being, which ends our disquiet, our anguish, the sense of the aimlessness of our fragile and fugitive existence. St. Ambrose says 'Not by dialectic did it please the Lord God to save His people'.<sup>1</sup> Religion is not mere contemplation of the truth but suffering for it. The human mind is sadly crippled in its religious thinking by the belief that truth has been found, embodied, standardised, and nothing remains for man to do but to reproduce feebly some precious features of an immutable perfection. Such a view of rationalistic self-sufficiency overlooks the quality of religion as spiritual adventure. In the Eastern religions, the fulfilment of man's life is an experience in which every aspect of his being is raised to its highest extent. We pass from darkness to light. We feel caught up in a universal purpose. Our being is integrated, our solitude is ended. We are no longer the victims of the world around us but its masters. Every religious seer from the moment he has the vision and is moved to the depths of his being launches on a new path. The Buddha or Jesus is a redeemer or saviour only in so far as he calls upon us to be born anew. In their life and teaching they set us examples of conversion whereby we break the bonds that are laid on us by our first birth and by nature and rise above our original imperfection. When our consciousness is raised above the normal, when *meta-noia* occurs, we apprehend the unknowable and experience a joy so extreme that no language is adequate to describe the ravishment of the soul, when it meets in its own depths the ground of its own life and of all reality.

This awareness of Absolute Being which the seers speak of is ineffable.<sup>2</sup> The Ineffable which we encounter can be *shown* but not

<sup>1</sup> Non in dialectica complacuit Domino Deo saluum facere populum suum. *De Fide* I. 5.42.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe in *Faust* says: 'With the people and especially with the clergy, who have him daily upon their tongues, God becomes a phrase, a mere name which they utter without any accompanying idea. But if they were penetrated with this greatness, they would rather be dumb, for very reverence would not dare to name him'.

said, in the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein.<sup>1</sup> Whitehead has some excellent words on this subject: 'It is characteristic of the learned mind to exalt words. Yet mothers can ponder many things which their lips cannot express. These many things which are thus known constitute the ultimate religious evidence beyond which there is no appeal'.<sup>2</sup> When the experience is communicated through symbols, there is variety in the latter which are shaped by the knowledge and beliefs of the seers. The basic experience is, however, the same whether we deal with Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Sufi mystics. The late Dean Inge said that 'whatever their creed, date or nationality, the witness of the mystics is wonderfully unanimous'.<sup>3</sup>

When the integral insight or the experience of the whole self is interpreted for purposes of communication by intellectual symbols, the latter are only symbolic. Eternity cannot be translated fully into categories of time, awareness of being cannot be adequately expressed in terms of existence, in spatio-temporal symbols. Yet they are not unrelated. Some of the religious ideas are results of profound insight. The symbols and images are used as aids to the worship of God, though they are not objects of worship themselves.

When we frame theories of religion we turn the being of the soul into the having of a thing. We transform what originally comprehended our being into some object which we ourselves comprehend. The total experience becomes an item of knowledge. The notions of God formed by men are not God Himself. The theories of God are tested by the facts or experiences of religion which prompted them. We should not take them as final and universally binding.

The Absolute which is beyond the distinctions of subject and object, as the divine subject illumines the plane of cosmic objectivation, sustains and absorbs it. The world which science studies is the revelation of spirit. All nature and life are sacramental.

When we say that God wills this world, it does not mean that His will is capricious. It only suggests that universal possibility is limitless and unpredictable. It also means that the created world cannot assume an absolute character. Were it so, then the relative would be absolute. Even as human beings are conformed to God, made in His image—otherwise they would not exist,—the world is the reflection of God. Even as we are different from God, the world is different from God.

<sup>1</sup> *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, E.T. 56. 522, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> *Religion in the Making*, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. II, p. 143.

Love of neighbour is taught by all religions but the capacity to love is difficult to attain. Growth in spiritual life is the only force which gives us the capacity to love our neighbour, even when we are not naturally inclined to do so. In the *Epistle of St. James*, it says: 'Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your desires, that war in your members'. Conflicting desires within men lead to strains and conflicts among men. We must be at harmony within ourselves. The words of St. Teresa are full of meaning. 'Christ has no body now on earth but yours; yours are the feet with which He goes about doing good; yours are the hands with which He blesses'. William Law, the great eighteenth century mystic said: 'By love I do not mean any natural tenderness, which is more or less in people according to their constitution; but I mean a larger principle of soul, founded in reason and piety which makes us tender, kind and gentle to all our fellow creatures as creatures of God and for His sake'.<sup>1</sup> This world has long suffered and bled from religious intolerance. Even the political intolerance of our time which has become as despotic, as universal and as bitter as any religious conflict has assumed a religious garb reminding us of the Crusades of the Middle Ages. The motive that impelled the Christian armies to march eastward was faith. But sincerity of faith is not a security against wild intolerance. The Crusaders thought that they were fighting for the Christian God against the Muslim God. They could not conceive it to be possible that the God of Islam might be the same God on whom they themselves relied.<sup>2</sup> All too often men feel that their loyalty to their religious society absolves them from the restraints they would impose on their private actions. We become ambitious not for ourselves but for our religious organisations. The phenomenon is described by William Law as 'turning to God with-

<sup>1</sup> yatra kvāpi sthito dharme sadācāraparo yadi,  
yāyād avasyam kalyāṇam iti dṛṣṭiḥ sudarśanam.

To whatever system of religion one may belong, if he is inclined towards good conduct, he will certainly attain happiness. This view is the right one. *Subodhaśāstrīprakāśa* (1938) p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> The historian of the Crusades, Mr. Steven Runciman, concludes his account with very significant words which have a bearing on the contemporary world situation: 'In the long sequence of interaction and fusion between Orient and Occident out of which our civilisation has grown, the Crusades were a tragic and destructive episode. The historian, as he gazes back across the centuries, must find his admiration overcast by sorrow at the witness that it bears to the limitations of human nature. There was so much courage and so little honour, so much devotion and so little understanding. High ideals were besmirched by cruelty and greed, enterprise and endurance by a blind and narrow self-righteousness; and the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost'. *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. III (1954) p. 480.

out turning from self'. All the lusts and prejudices of the heart are retained but identified with some supposedly religious cause. 'Pride, self-exaltation, hatred and persecution, under a cloak of religious zeal will sanctify actions which nature, left to itself, would be ashamed to own'. We are prepared to burn and torture in the name of the love of God. Mankind seems to be involved in a corporate system of evil to which it seems to be in bondage. It appears as though some monster had taken charge of it, which possesses men and situations, making the best endeavours of honest men and using their good impulses for evil purposes. If God is love,<sup>1</sup> He cannot be a jealous God. With jealous God goes the doctrine of the chosen people. If God's light is the light that lighteth every man<sup>2</sup> that He left not Himself without witness<sup>3</sup> the adherents of religions other than our own are not shut out from the love of God. There are alternative approaches to the mystery of God.

At its depth, religion in its silences and expressions is the same. There is a common ground on which the different religious traditions rest. This common ground belongs of right to all of us, as it has its source in the non-historical, the eternal. The same elements appear in the experiences of the seers of the different religions. We all seek the same goal under different banners. When we get across the frontiers of formulas and the rigidities of regulations, the same spiritual life is to be found. The universality of fundamental ideas which historical studies demonstrate is the hope of the future. It emphasises the profound truth which Eastern religions had always stressed, the transcendent unity underlying the empirical diversity of religions.

There have been in the Christian world too, many profound thinkers who did not believe in spiritual exclusiveness. Nicholas of Cusa was prepared to recognise elements of truth in non-Christian religions. According to him Christianity should give as well as receive. He believed in the *coincidentia oppositorum*, i.e. everything lives and takes effect by reason of being the point of intersection of two opposite forces. God is all-embracing infinity and is found in even the smallest thing.<sup>4</sup> Professor Arnold J. Toynbee<sup>5</sup> writes that he

<sup>1</sup> I John IV. 16.

<sup>2</sup> John I. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Acts XIV. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Cyrus, the Persian Emperor, when he overthrew the Babylonians under whom Judaea was, gave the Jews all possible help for rebuilding Jerusalem and its temple. It is interesting to know that in Hungary, under the leadership of its ruler, Prince Sigismund, the Diet of Torda in 1557 issued a decree 'that everyone may freely embrace the religion and faith that he has preferred and may support preachers of his own religion, and that neither party shall disturb the other's worship or do harm or inflict injury on the other' quoted in *Hibbert Journal*, January 1954, p. 157.

<sup>5</sup> *A Study of History*, Vol. II (1954) p. 428.

would 'express his personal belief that the four higher religions that were alive in the age in which he was living were four variations on a single theme, and that, if all the four components of this heavenly music of the spheres could be audible on earth simultaneously, and with equal clarity, to one pair of human ears, the happy hearer would find himself listening, not to a discord, but to a harmony'. He does not believe that any one religion is an exclusive and definitive revelation of spiritual truth. To deny to other religions that they may be 'God's chosen and sufficient channels for revealing Himself to some human souls, is for me, to be guilty of blasphemy'. He quotes Symmachus who says: 'the heart of so great a mystery can never be reached by following one road only'.<sup>1</sup> Archbishop William Temple puts it in a different way: 'All that is noble in the non-Christian systems of thought or conduct or worship is the work of Christ upon them and within them. By the Word of God—that is to say, by Jesus Christ—Isaiah and Plato and Zoroaster and (the) Buddha and Confucius conceived and uttered such truths as they declared. There is only one divine light, and every man in his measure is enlightened by it. Yet, each has only a few rays of that light, which needs all the wisdom of all the human traditions to manifest the entire compass of its spectrum'.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Christianity shows how in its great days it was capable of giving as well as receiving. It has been perpetually changing its emphasis and even surrendering its dogmas. It adapted itself to the needs of the Roman Empire when it converted it, of the barbarian world which had its own cultural traditions and social institutions. The medieval Catholic belief in the impossibility of salvation outside the Church has faded away. I do not think there are many today who support the clear cut ruling of Lateran IV, *De Fide*

<sup>1</sup> Professor Toynbee explains his position in clear terms: In our spiritual struggle, he says 'I guess that both the West and the world are going to turn away from man—worshipping ideologies—Communism and secular individualism alike—and become converted to an Oriental religion coming neither from Russia nor from the West. I guess that this will be the Christian religion that came to the Greeks and the Romans from Palestine, with one of two elements in traditional Christianity discarded and replaced by a new element from India. I expect and hope that this avatar of Christianity will include the vision of God as being Love. But I also expect and hope that it will discard the other traditional Christian vision of God as being a jealous god, and that it will reject the self-glorification of this jealous god's "chosen people" as being unique. This is where India comes in, with her belief (complementary to the vision of God as Love) that there may be more than one illuminating and saving approach to the mystery of the universe'. *Times Literary Supplement* (April 16, 1954) p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> *Readings in Saint John's Gospel*, First Series (1939).



*Catholica*: 'There is only one universal Church of the faithful and outside it none at all can be saved'. In this changing world even dogmas change. Take, for example, the medieval doctrine of the eternal perdition of unbaptised infants. Take Augustine's words: 'Hold fast to this truth, that not only men of rational age but even babes who die without the sacrament of baptism in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, pass from this world to be punished in eternal fire'.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, as late as A.D. 1100, 'St. Anselm was at one with St. Augustine in holding that unbaptised children share in the positive sufferings of the damned'. The authoritative 'Catechism of the Council of Trent' (1566) holds that unbaptised children are 'born to eternal misery and perdition'. Catholics do not accept this dogma today.

We should not insist on an objective, universally valid doctrinal content. Where everybody thinks alike nobody thinks at all. In a world community each individual will have freedom to evolve his own realisation of the Supreme and the historical faiths will remain free to grow according to their own genius. Each religion contributes to the richness of the whole even as each note contributes to the complexity and harmony of the music of the symphony. In the present crisis, the spiritual forces of the world must come together and the great religious traditions should transcend their differences of form, underline their basic unity and draw from it the strength necessary to counter materialistic determinism. The type of religion here outlined is scientific, empirical and humanistic. It fosters the full development of man which includes the spirit in man. It will not be silent in the face of man's inhumanity to man.

Islam attracted attention because it complained about the theological controversies in which Christians lost themselves neglecting the social problems. Communism again is attracting attention because it condemned the other-worldly and reactionary character of religion. Truly religious souls will identify themselves with the social and human revolution that is afoot and guide the aspirations of mankind for a better and fuller life.

Christ is the second Adam, the first born of a new race of men, who, as the spiritual kingdom is spread on earth, will achieve a unity of nature and supernature, comparable to our present union of mind and animal nature but transcending it as rational life transcends the sentient life below it. The effort of man to remake himself and

<sup>1</sup> De hoc saeculo transeunt sempiterna igne puniendos.



remake the world in the pattern of a divine order gives greatness and significance to his failures. The Christian hope is the creation of a new species of spiritual personality of which the first fruits had already been manifested in Jesus and the saints. They are the heralds of truth on earth, the instruments of the Divine for the spread of spiritual religion. The process of creation is still going on. It is not complete. It is in the process of completion.<sup>1</sup>

#### V. CONCLUSION

We are living at the dawn of a new era of universal humanity. There is a thrill of hope, a flutter of expectation as when the first glimmer of dawn awakens the earth. Whether we like it or not we live in one world<sup>2</sup> and require to be educated to a common conception of human purpose and destiny. The different nations should live together as members of the human race, not as hostile entities but as friendly partners in the endeavour of civilisation. The strong shall help the weak and all shall belong to the one world federation of free nations. If we escape from the dangers attendant on the control by irresponsible men, of sources of power hitherto unimaginable, we will unite the peoples of all races in a community, catholic, comprehensive and co-operative. We will realise that no people or group of peoples has had a monopoly in contributing to the development of civilisation. We will recognise and celebrate the achievements of all nations and thus promote universal brotherhood. Especially in matters of religion we must understand the valuable work of the sages of other countries and ages.

Peace is not the mere absence of war; it is the development of a strong fellow-feeling, an honest appreciation of other people's ideas and values. Distinctions of a physical character diminish in importance as the understanding of the significance of the inner life of man increases. We need, not merely a closer contact between East

<sup>1</sup> *Colossians* I. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Gone are the days when madness was confined  
By seas or hills from spreading through Mankind:  
When, though a Nero fooled upon a string,  
Wisdom still reigned unruffled in Peking;  
And God in welcome smiled from Buddha's face,  
Though Calvin in Geneva preached of grace.  
For now our linked-up globe has shrunk so small,  
One Hitler in it means mad days for all.  
Through the whole World each wave of worry spreads,  
And Ipoh dreads the war that Ipsden dreads.

Martyn Skinner: *Letters to Malaya*, I and II, 1941, pp. 34-5.

and West but a closer union, a meeting of minds and a union of hearts.

Mankind stems from one origin from which it has figured out in many forms. It is now striving toward the reconciliation of that which has been split up. The separation of East and West is over. The history of the new world, the one world, has begun. It promises to be large in extent, varied in colour, rich in quality.

## APPENDIX

### SCIENCE IN INDIA

Science is generally understood to be Western science with its marvellous inventions and technological devices. But basic scientific ideas and techniques can be traced back to antiquity and the East has played an important part in the development of science. Many of the treasures of civilisation came from the East, e.g. the alphabet came from the East, Syria and Palestine, and was transmitted through Greece and Etruria to Rome and the Western world.

The early science of India had two major interests, one mathematical and astronomical, the other medical. The *Sulva Sūtra* of Āpastamba contains a generalised statement of the Pythagorean theorems as well as many other specific problems. 'While the *Sulva Sūtra* is probably post-Pythagorean in date, the specific formulae are almost certainly non-Greek and of native origin. Whether they are old empirical numerical findings from which the geometric theorem was subsequently generalised, or whether they are specific Hindu arithmetical application developed out of the theorem, is less clear. In short, we have here a genuine Hindu mathematical production'.<sup>1</sup> The important invention of position numerals and the symbol for Zero are Hindu contributions.<sup>2</sup>

In astronomy we have the five *siddhāntas*, *Paitāmaha* Vasiṣṭha, Sūrya, Pauliṣa and Romaka. In the last, direct Greek influences are evident. The tradition has been continuous through Āryabhaṭa (A.D. fifth century), Varāhamihira (sixth century), Brahmagupta (sixth and seventh centuries), Mahāvīra (ninth century), Śrīdhara (tenth century), Bhāskara (twelfth century).

The medical science arose in early days. In the days of the Buddha, Ātreya taught at Takṣaśīla in the far north-west and Suśruta

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Kroeber: *Configurations of Cultural Growth* (1944) p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> The first reference to the Hindu numerals, outside of India, occurs in a work by Severus Sebokht. Comparing Greek and Syrian knowledge, he wrote in A.D. 662: 'I will omit all discussion of the sciences of the Hindus; their valuable method of calculation; and their computing which surpasses all description. I wish only to say that this computation is done by means of nine signs'. S. F. Mason: *A History of the Sciences* (1953) p. 67.

was his younger contemporary who taught at Kāśī or Banaras. The latter school emphasised surgery—hernia, caesarean, lithotomy, cataract. It describes 121 different surgical instruments. The connection between malaria and mosquitoes was noted as also the presence of sugar in the urine of diabetic patients. Caraka born in Kashmir, who lived in Kaṇiṣka's time (A.D. 120–162) wrote a work based on Agniveśa, a pupil of Ātreya. Vāgbhaṭa senior and junior, Mādhavakara and Vrnda are other names.

The iron pillar of Delhi which dates about the year A.D. 400 stands over 28 feet high with a diameter beginning at 16.4 inches and diminishing to 12.04 inches. It is made of pure, rustless iron. How did they produce it?

The Sultanganj Buddha image of pure copper cast in two layers over an inner core  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high and weighing a ton also dates about the year 400. These are marvels of engineering skill.

Sanskrit grammar developed earlier than Greek. Yāska wrote his etymological commentary on the Vedas, called the *Nirukta*. It is pre-Pāṇinian, the date being somewhere between 700–500 B.C. Pāṇini is the greatest name in philology and grammar and belongs to late sixth century B.C. Pāṇini mentions Yāska and Śaunaka as his predecessors. His *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (Eight Section) is the culmination of a long philological development. Pāṇini accepts the rules and states the exceptions. His *Aṣṭādhyāyī* consists of about 4,000 aphorisms. These could not have been invented all on a sudden by a single author and imposed on others. It is a growth of centuries and Pāṇini was the final redactor of the traditional grammar *Vyākaraṇa* and his work cites many predecessors. He superseded them on account of his accuracy and comprehensiveness.

Pāṇini's work, according to the commentator, Patañjali is a great treatise well accomplished.<sup>1</sup> Kātyāyana's *Vārttika*, or notes were composed soon after Pāṇini's *Sūtras* and were commented on by Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* (second century B.C.). The whole development in philology took place between 600–100 B.C. Dr. Kroeber remarks: 'This high development of so abstruse and self-conscious an activity as philology at so early a time remains perpetually astonishing. It suggests the existence of a vast historic lacuna in our knowledge of more ancient India—a great realm

<sup>1</sup> Pāṇinīyam mahat suvhitam IV. 2. 66 ; II. 285. He is regarded as a teacher of the highest authority. Pramāṇabhūta ācārya I. 139 ; I. 39.

which we can hope to see in part explored by archaeology alone'.<sup>1</sup>

In the later development of philology, the important names are Śarvavarman (A.D. 300) the author of *Kātantra*. Candragomin (A.D. 600), Bhartṛhari (A.D. seventh century) who wrote the *Vākya-padīya* which deals more with the philosophy of language than with philology or grammar, Jayāditya and Vāmana who wrote the *Kāśīkavṛtti*, a textbook on Pāṇini. About 1625, Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita published *Siddhāntakaumudī* which is a convenient compendium to Pāṇini.

'The Sanskrit grammarians were the first to analyse word-forms, to recognise the difference between root and suffix, to determine the functions of suffixes, and on the whole to elaborate a grammatical system so accurate and complete as to be unparalleled in any other country'.<sup>2</sup> Professor Weber regards Pāṇini's grammar as 'superior to all similar works of other countries, by the thoroughness with which it investigates the roots of the language and the formations of its words'.<sup>3</sup>

Hegel observed: 'India as a land of desire formed an essential element in general history. From the most ancient times downwards, all nations have directed their wishes and longings to gaining access to the treasures of this land of marvels, the most costly which the earth presents, treasures of nature—pearls, diamonds, perfumes, rose essences, lions, elephants etc.—as also treasures of wisdom. The way by which these treasures have passed to the West has at all times been a matter of world historical importance bound up with the fate of nations'.

<sup>1</sup> *Configurations of Culture Growth* (1944) p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Macdonell: *India's past*, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Indian Literature*, p. 216.

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